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Full Name of Author — Nom complet de l'auteur

Leslie Ann Elizabeth Savage

Date of Birth — Date de naissance

4 October, 1944

Country of Birth — Lieu de naissance

Canada

Permanent Address — Résidence fixe

6002- 111 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T5W0K9

Title of Thesis — Titre de la thèse

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Dr. Robert J. Carney

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INFANTICIDE, ILLEGITIMACY AND THE ORIGINS AND EVOLUTION OF THE ROLE OF THE MISERICORDIA SISTERS, MONTREAL AND EDMONTON, 1848 - 1906

A STUDY IN CHILD RESCUE AND FEMALE REFORM

by

LESLIE A. E. SAVAGE

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

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Master of Education

1982

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Leslie Savage

PERMANENT ADDRESS: 6002 - 111 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T5W 0K9

DATED September 3, 1982

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled Infanticide, Illegitimacy and the Origins and Evolution of the Role of the Misericordia Sisters, Montreal and Edmonton, 1848 - 1906; A Study in Child Rescue and Female Reform submitted by Leslie A. E. Savage in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education in History of Education.

Supervisor

Date September 3, 1982

This thesis is dedicated to my mother,
Barbara Margaret Ferguson.

ABSTRACT

This study describes the work of the Misericordia Sisters of Montreal and Edmonton, 1848-1906. This work was originally the rescue, relief and reform of unwed mothers and the rescue of their illegitimate children. In Montreal the Misericordia endeavour thrives today in altered form, but with essentially the same concern. When the Sisters came to Edmonton in 1900, their focus shifted from the care of unwed mothers to general hospital nursing. By 1906 this change had taken place. This study describes various aspects of the origins and evolution of the Order, in its social context, as a means of understanding the reasons for this change.

Chapter One provides a brief description of some recent studies on family life and the institutionalization of moral reform in North America.

Chapter Two provides a few historical perspectives on illegitimacy in a society ordered by the family as the primary unit of social cohesion. From antiquity to modern times, Western societies have to one degree or another stigmatized unmarried maternity and illegitimate birth, with child exposure, abandonment or murder the usual strategy for disposing of a child for whom a husbandless woman was unable or unwilling to provide. From early times, the Christian Church opposed the existence of these practices. Unable, however, to completely enforce its own rules in a society that remained part secular, the Church provided relief in the form of shelter and sustenance to abandoned and exposed children through its religious orders. From this Christian will to preserve infant life derive the

origins of the work of the Misericordia.

Chapter Three describes the establishment in 1848 and the flowering of the Misericordia, 1848-1900, in Montreal. It outlines briefly the urban conditions - poverty, religious conservatism, a patriarchal family order bolstered by laws derived from pre-revolutionary France - in which the Misericordia came to life. The role of the Misericordia in the rehabilitation of unwed mothers is analyzed and found to embody a symbolic return to a childhood state in which social and moral values could ideally be re-learned. The rescue and rehabilitation of unwed mothers was the essential activity of the Misericordia of Montreal, although orphanage work too was a part of their work.

Chapter Four follows the Misericordia to Edmonton, where four Sisters established a mission in 1900. In Alberta, the rehabilitational work did not flourish as it had in Montreal. As noted, by 1906, the focus of the Sisters' work had shifted from the care of unwed mothers to general hospital nursing. A description of social conditions in Edmonton circa 1900 demonstrates that demographic, socio-economic, and religious circumstances combined to make social and moral attitudes to female deportment less restrictive than was the case in Montreal, decreasing the need for specialized care for unmarried mothers. At the same time, a need for medical and nursing skills was an aspect of the rapid transition of Edmonton from a frontier town to a small but relatively modern city. The fluid institutional structure of the Misericordia's internal administration made possible a change in role unattended by major disruption of either previous service or ties to the Mother House in Montreal.

Chapter Five provides a summary of the contents of the preceding chapters, a conclusion and suggestions for further study. Conceptually, the origins of female rehabilitation are found to be in child rescue, as the prevention of infanticide is the traditionally Christian motive for saving and re-educating unwed mothers. The study furthers an understanding of little examined Catholic initiatives in philanthropy and social benevolence in nineteenth century Canada. It provides insight into the educational role of a womens' religious order. It is an example of institutional change. Finally, it documents an aspect of social history hitherto unexplored in Alberta's past. The study indicates that while the resources for social history in the Canadian west may not be easy of access, they do exist and can be interpreted, they are most meaningful, however, when taken as part of a wider spectrum that includes the Europeanized traditions of the Canadian past.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AAE	Archives of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton.
ASM	Archives of the Order of the Sisters of Misericordia, Lachine, Quebec.
PAC	Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa.
PAA	Provincial Archives of Alberta, Edmonton.

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

The work of the Order of the Sisters of Misericordia, founded in Montreal in 1848, represents a model of religious benevolence directly concerned with the rescue and reform of unmarried pregnant women and girls, and of their illegitimate children. Founded in Montreal as the Hospice Sainte-Pélagie (1845) and in 1848 established as the Order of the Sisters of Misericordia, the Order had by its fiftieth anniversary in 1898 given sanctuary and maternity care to over fourteen thousand women.[1]

In 1900, on the request of the Oblate Fathers of St. Albert, in the North West Territories, four Sisters of the Misericordia journeyed west to Edmonton, there to establish a mission. Although the Montreal Mother House continued its tradition of service to unwed mothers, the Edmonton Misericordia, within six years of its inception, changed the focus of its work to general hospital nursing. In Alberta, the Order retained an interest in the problems of unwed mothers and their children, and, until the sale of the Misericordia Hospital to the Government of Alberta in 1962, maintained a home for unmarried mothers. This interest was, however, by 1906 secondary to the efforts made in general health care. With this shift came, not unnaturally, a change in the educative role of the Misericordia. Whereas in their work with unwed mothers in Montreal the nature of that role was clearly rehabilitative as well as redemptive, the educative focus of the Sisters in Edmonton changed to encompass two facets: the work of maintaining an orphanage and nursing training. To investigate these changes in the institutional and educative roles of the Misericordia in Edmonton constitutes the major

problem addressed by this study.

Purpose of the Study

In order to investigate the nature of and reasons for these changes in the Misericordia's institutional expression, this study will explore the origins and evolution of the rescue and rehabilitation work of the Misericordia Sisters in late nineteenth century Montreal and early twentieth century Alberta. The reform efforts of the Order will be shown to derive from the specifically Christian will to preserve human life, and from the charitable forms of care for the poor that emerged in medieval Europe. If the roots of the Misericordia are deeply imbedded in the social fabric of European culture, the evolution of the Order and the flexibility it demonstrated, will be seen to be closely tied to socio-economic and ideological conditions that prevailed locally in the communities in which the Sisters lived. In particular, prevailing practices of marriage and sexual morality influenced the direction of their endeavours.

Sub-Problems and Themes

There are a number of secondary problems that must be addressed if these changes in the role of the Misericordia Sisters are to be understood. The first concerns the perceived need for the specialized treatment of unmarried mothers and illegitimate children in the nineteenth century. What made them different from other mothers and children? Secondly, what was the form of the Misericordia response to the problems thus defined of unwed maternity and illegitimacy? Thirdly, whatever the conditions and attitudes that tempered the experience of unwed mothers and their children in Montreal during the late nineteenth

century, did these operate in a similar manner in the North West Territories, particularly in Alberta at the onset of the twentieth? Finally, if the response of the Misericordia in their new mission in Alberta changed, as has been suggested, what conditions, materially or otherwise, caused it to do so?

Background to the Problems

The search for answers to these questions can be approached by exploring three major themes. One is the patriarchal nature of the social order in Europe and Europeanized cultures, and the perception and practice of legitimate marriage in that order. The second is the rescue of child life from infanticide, exposure or abandonment, and the implications of child-saving for educational and social history, in particular the history of childhood. The third is the development of Roman Catholic religious philanthropy in Canada. This study of the Misericordia provides a microcosm through which we can see to advantage the links that draw these themes together, although it is mainly the second and third that are discussed in the following chapters.

As a broad generalization, patriarchal European society was, with wide variations according to time and place, but in a depressingly reassertive pattern, hostile to the sexual non-conformity of women, hostile to unmarried maternity and hostile to illegitimate children.[2]

One explanation for the stigma of illegitimacy that has found favour with historians, probably because of its deceptively straight forward intelligibility, is an economic one. As long as property has ordered our social system, it has been argued its devolution, rightful or otherwise, has been a major concern in the minds of its owners.[3] When a lack of chastity has threatened its appropriation to the heir as

designated by the rules of male lineage, it has been, in a classic syndrome of blaming the victim, the child born of the illicit union who, along with the mother, has been punished. Whatever the reasons, illegitimate children, as historians of childhood have made clear, have long been subject to desertion, sale, deprivation of their rights, mutilation and infanticide.[4]

These attitudes and behaviours have not been without opposition. The role of the Christian Church in these matters has been an ambivalent one, but ultimately has opposed the extreme forms of stigmatization accorded to the illegitimate even as it endorsed the notion of legitimate marriage on which the idea of illegitimacy is hinged.

The teachings of Christian churchmen agreed with secular authorities on the issue of chastity, insisting that sexual intercourse outside of marriage, which sanctified sex via the procreative purpose, was sinful. They agreed also that, as the education of children was a parental duty best undertaken in a family setting, unwed motherhood was to be condemned on more grounds than the sinfulness of unmarried sex.[5] Hélène Bergues argues that the attitude of the Church to contraception, abortion and implicitly infanticide, stems from two major concerns: the protection of life, and respect for what is natural, both of which are marks of deference to the authority of an order divine.[6] Because of its uncompromising stand on these points, the Church from earliest times vehemently opposed any form of infanticide and attempted to mitigate its practice. Institutionalized forms of charity, of Christian caritas, emerged as mechanisms by which the Church might deal with the discrepancy between its own desire to protect child life and the tendency of patriarchal secular society to destroy its unwanted young. The Misericordia is an example of such an institution.

There is a paradoxical element in the notion of illegitimacy in a nominally Christian society in which the equality of all souls before God is a basic tenet. On the one hand this doctrine makes imperative the recognition - through the Covenant of baptism - of all children, legitimate or not.[7] On the other hand the cohesion of the family, in official Christian thought, has long been thought to be best protected through the preservation of family authority, traditionally invested, in Western society, in the father.[8] One feature of social stability for that family system has been the rejection of children born outside the boundary of sanctioned marriage. The Church has not condoned this rejection, but has had to carry on the fight against it without undermining the traditional primacy of the family in the social order.

Definition of Terms

In this study a number of terms will be used with meaning that is common in the literature of histories of childhood and education, but which may be confusing to the general reader. The distinctions between relief, rescue, rehabilitation and reform are not always clear-cut, but in general these terms can be defined as follows. They apply particularly to social action in its institutionalized forms.

Relief, first of all, is a general term used to describe the material alleviation of suffering, usually by gifts of money, food and clothing to persons unable to provide for themselves. Rescue implies a duality of spiritual and physical salvation. The concept of rescue has been extended by historians of childhood[9] to mean a safe guarding of young life from the malevolent forces of an environment where the innocence and health of the child are threatened by immorality and corruption. There is an element of rescue in the Misericordia Sisters'

treatment of unwed mothers as "lost little lambs," in which women are infantilized by the dependence incurred in the process of rehabilitation. The concept of rehabilitation means a restoration of the unwed mother to a state of grace and of improved deportment assumed as possible if not actually nascent. The aim of the rehabilitation process was repentance and a restoration to a state of grace, as well as changed social attitudes and behaviours. A certain programme was laid out by the Order to direct this educational process which was essentially an educational one. The woman's reform would be complete when both secular rehabilitation and spiritual redemption were achieved. Reform is a more general term than the others, incorporates elements of both rescue and rehabilitation.

Survey of the Literature

Readings in the history of childhood, and in the social history of Europe, Quebec and Alberta, have provided background to the study. Ultimately, it is the perceptions of childhood historians which have provided the particular focus that permitted the essence of the Misericordia's work to surface, as will be demonstrated in Chapter Three. The rescue of unwed mothers was also a rescue of their illegitimate children, who as the records show were long subject to various forms of stigma which in its most extreme expression culminated in infanticide, whether perpetrated directly or less consciously in an act of exposure or abandonment.

Edward Shorter has observed that infanticide is at present of interest to historians of the family because of two possibilities which can be identified as relating to the social history of modern Europe and North America: firstly, that, apparent changes in fertility levels

plotted by European demographers may have in fact been shifts in the levels of infanticide which distorted the birth registers; and secondly, that "a decline in infanticide may have heralded the onset of a new maternal tenderness" that in turn may have resulted in better child-care as well as smaller families.[10]

The question of infanticide, its extent and the attitudes and circumstances surrounding it, are central to perceptions of the modern family described by Philippe Ariès in his seminal work, Centuries of Childhood.[11] From Ariès' description of the modern family as private, inward looking and sentimentally directed to the education of its young, have stemmed a multitude of studies that reinforce his postulation that between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries the western family changed its role from that of an economic unit concerned mainly with names and estates, to that of a nurturing one. Critics of Ariès[12] tend to overlook the dual nature of his argument, which claims both a structural change in the family from an extended kin relation to a nuclear conjugal unit, and an ideological shift in the way children and youth have been conceptualized. It is the latter which gives Ariès' book its claim to validity, and which in turn is supported by the record of infanticide. It was during the sixteenth century, the time argued by Ariès as that of the flowering of new attitudes towards child life, that were elaborated the sentiments that later culminated in child saving through the formal institutionalized care of unwed mothers.

Patricia T. Rooke has noted that historians have generated two major interpretations of the evolution in the perception of childhood and its effects on family life since the publication of Ariès' book in 1962.[13] One explanation of why and how this major ideological change came about has been attempted by Lloyd de Mause in his psychogenetic theory of

history. This richly original and provocative argument has the drawback of being ultimately deterministic because its final appeal is to instinct rather than reason. The way parents treat their children depends, in de Mause's view, on their ability or lack of it to transcend treatment they received from their parents. The prime motive force is the subconscious; the argument necessitates a view of child rearing that makes certain actions, certain "modes of childrearing," a foregone conclusion, or pre-determined. The studies have thus been called case histories in psychology, rather than historical studies per se.[14]

Aries' view of the emergence of the modern family has received one other major interpretation. R. L. Schnell in "Childhood as Ideology"[15] emphasizes the role of ideas, - of reason in other words - in the sentimentalization of childhood and its effect on family life, and argues that the change in sentiment observed by Aries constitutes an "ideology of childhood" in which childhood has come to be seen as framed by four main categories, or ideas: protection, separation, dependence and delayed responsibilities. "Childhood," in this framework, implies the necessary rescue of the child from the vicissitudes of a world that is indifferent if not malevolent.[16] The decline of infanticide can be understood as a manifestation of the "protected" aspect of childhood, deriving from the idea that child life should be, for various reasons, "saved."

As an overview of infanticide in the West, William L. Langer's "Infanticide: A Historical Survey"[17] provides an introduction and useful references. Although until early modern times "child murder continued to be practiced, even in the most advanced countries of Western Europe,"[18] Langer argues that the advent of Christianity changed the views of Europeans towards infanticide.

The fact is, however, that Christian moralists were ineffective in their campaign to stamp out infanticide. Although at some times and among some people, perhaps even the majority, infanticide was eradicated or substantially reduced, it continued up to and including the nineteenth century to be a reality of Western social life.

An extremely useful although brief, and available only in French, discussion of infanticide is Hélène Bergues' "Exposition, abandon d'enfants, infanticides," in La Prévention des Naissances dans la famille,[19] which makes a close connection between contraceptive and abortive practices and child exposure, abandonment or murder, seeing all as strategies to control fertility by those who refuse the parental role. These strategies are particularly linked to pregnancy outside of marriage.

The most likely victims of infanticide have throughout the history of the West been the illegitimate children of the slave or poor classes of society. There were few incentives to rear a destitute child who was kin to no one in the pre-modern world where social status centred on ascribed characteristics. In more recent times the practical difficulties of raising a child on the earnings of an unmarried woman - assuming she could get work, which with a child in tow was frequently impossible - were often insurmountable.

In tracing the history of illegitimacy, Peter Laslett, Director of the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure, and other historians both French and English - notably those publishing in the French Annales de Démographie Historique, draw on parish records of births, marriages and deaths as well as sources such as hospital and school records, civil registrations, tax rolls and court proceedings to compile statistical evidence about past social life. Laslett's Family

Life and Illicit Love in Earlier Generations (1977)[20] and, with Karla Oosterveen and Richard M. Smith, Bastardy and its Comparative History (1980) provide a range of perspectives on illegitimacy.

Laslett stresses the importance of studies of illegitimacy, saying that "records of bastardy have revealed unexpected continuity in social structure over the centuries."[21] He views illegitimacy as both an intellectual problem and a socio-historical one. In tracing the historiography of bastardy he outlines three phases of interest in illegitimacy. First was the moralistic, or crudely positivist writing of writers such as Albert Leffingwell in the 1890's. In reaction to this was a functionalist approach - unhistorical, purportedly ethically impartial, deriving from anthropologists such as Malinowski and Davis who saw illegitimacy as deviance, and as such definitive of social norms. Since 1970, Laslett claims, there has been a return to the historical context with a revival of interest in the history of moralities and the rules of respectability." Laslett argues that "it is in terms of courtship and marriage, their variations between period and period, cultural tradition and cultural tradition, locality and locality, that we should begin to understand illegitimacy in the light of its comparative history."[22] This historical approach yields "a view of this phenomenon very different from that put forward by most of the morausts and functionalists," including for example a temporal pattern in rates of illegitimacy not dissimilar to fluctuations in fertility and mortality, and patterns of regional persistant that point to the need to study marriage and courtship on a local scale. Also opened to view by studies of illegitimacy, Laslett notes, are social factors such as succession to property and status; the mechanics of social control and their effectiveness; the relationships between social classes; and as

well the "myriad histories of contempt, oppression and neglect" of bastard children themselves, "whose lives were frequently so very brief, but who, if they did survive, could be objects of such obloquy, and who might harbour such resentment in return."[23]

Laslett suggests that among other methods, it is through the study of the "rules of respectability, of praise and blame for people's conduct", that historical comparisons of illegitimacy can meaningfully be undertaken, adding that "it is only necessary to write out these rules in order to recognize that, although respectability is an important category of esteem in our society, it is a very unreliable guide to what people actually do."[24]

An illuminating study of these rules and regulations is J. L. Flandrin's Families in Former Times.[25] Based on a wide range of sources, from confessors' manuals to recent quantitative studies in fertility, illegitimacy and mortality trends in France, Flandrin traces the contours of family life in attitudinal perspectives from medieval to early modern times.

Particularly responsive also to the idea that it is in the study of marriage and courtship that the paradox of illegitimacy will be clarified is Hareven and Wheaton's compilation of essays, Family and Sexuality in French History,[26] in which Flandrin's "Repression and Change in the Sexual Life of Young People in Medieval and Early Modern Times,"[27] and Beatrice Gottlieb's "The Meaning of Clandestine Marriage,"[28] are particularly relevant to the study of illegitimacy.

A study of specifically nineteenth century mores is E. Van de Walle's "Illegitimacy in France during the Nineteenth Century."[29] In nineteenth century France, official attitudes to illegitimate children were somewhat different than in England, although the results were

similar. Title VII, "Paternity and Filiation," of the Civil Code promulgated in 1803, stipulated that bastards be classed as either reconnus or non reconnus[30] and inherit accordingly, although they could expect only one-third of what might be allowed to a legitimate child. As well, bastards could be legitimated by the subsequent marriage of the parents, which was not the case in England. In spite of this legislation, the effects of which in any case were somewhat short-lived, nineteenth century France "avowedly aimed at protecting the family and its patrimony against the claims of spurious issue. It was generous neither to the child nor to the mother."[31] The state did assist private philanthropies in the care of foundlings, however. The Saint Vincent de Paul Hospital for foundlings in Paris in 1826 received 118,000 children; in 1831 the figure was 131,000 children.[32] Of these, the large majority were to die as a result of either transportation to the countryside or, once there, at the hands of mercenary, neglectful or murderous nurses.[33]

As for Anglo-Saxon society, Pinchbeck and Hewitt, in Children in English Society,[34] describe the position of illegitimate children in England from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries. Setting the stage for conditions in the English capital, for example, was a civil policy that in 1758 was shaped by the Poor Law, which was "intentionally operated in such a way as not only to humiliate the mother but to stigmatize the child."[35] Blackstone defined the incapacity of the illegitimate child as owing to his lack of affiliation: "he cannot be heir to anyone, neither can he have heirs, but of his own body for being nullius filius, he is therefore kin to nobody."[36] London's Foundling Hospital, established in 1739 by Thomas Coram, was incapable of accepting more than a fraction of the illegitimate children born to poor women[37] who by law could sue the putative father of their child for

support, but in practice rarely did so, and were forced to apply for parish poor rates, enter a workhouse or somehow dispose of the child. In 1870 the authorities picked up in the areas of Brixton and Peckham alone two hundred and seventy six infant corpses - eleven every two weeks.[38]

Pinchbeck and Hewitt's account is of particular interest because the authors are sensitive to the temptation to reduce the causes of child abandonment to questions of shame or want alone, noting that although the majority of children rescued by philanthropic organizations in the nineteenth century were illegitimate, many also

> were the legitimate children of the poor, who were unable to support them on account of poverty or the death of the breadwinner, or because of the shifting habits of their lives, or quite simply because they did not choose to accept the responsibility of parenthood.[39]

This willingness to accept the possibility that some parents were, apart from the admittedly abysmal conditions in which they lived, negligent, cruel and irresponsible, is apt; for the claims of environmentalism in the social sciences have been so pervasive as to allow historians to gloss over the quite considerable efforts of some families who also lived in dismal poverty to provide for their children as well as their meagre resources would allow.

Pinchbeck and Hewitt note that neither unwed motherhood nor illegitimacy was a social barrier to the upper classes who could afford to support their baseborn offspring and to ignore the dictates of conventional morality.[40] Even through their philanthropy, however, the rich did little to extend this tolerance to the poor; orphanages more frequently than not did not accept illegitimate children, the reason being given that "children begotten in sin would naturally enough

inherit their parents' weakness, and hence they would surely contaminate the minds and morals of the lawfully begotten."[41] Illegitimacy was "an offence against Christian morality and the institution of marriage; because of the cost which was laid upon the parish and public charity, it was an offence against the well-being of society."[42] In Protestant England, from Elizabethan times, the prevailing view was that to allow unwed mothers public charity was to encourage vice, immorality and illegitimacy by providing a means of shedding responsibility for one's children onto charity.

Shifting the emphasis from Europe to North America, Peter Ward's paper "Unwed Motherhood in Nineteenth Century English Canada"[43] is one of the few studies to date on unmarried maternity in Canada's past. Ward argues convincingly that, in English Canada at least, social attitudes to unwed mothers were characterized by tolerance tinged with disapproval, and were lenient enough to allow families to shelter daughters in trouble at home.[44] Ward's data related to English CanadHe notes that despite widespread tolerance in rural areas, the existence in cities of a variety of institutions, formal and informal, such as lying-in hospitals, boarding homes and Magdalene Asylums where pregnant women could seek refuge, indicates that the urban response was less open-minded.

No single concept is of greater importance to understanding the work of the Misericordia than the Christian impetus towards the preservation of human life. Of great value in this regard, as well as Bergues' Prévention des Naissances dans la Famille,[45] is John T. Noonan's Contraception: A History of its Treatment by the Catholic Theologians and Canonists. Noonan offers too a resolution of a problem that arises when a secularist studies a religious institution: that is, how

to enter into the imaginative space necessary to the mental reconstruction of the past, when the meaning of that past, or certain aspects of it, seems to be accessible largely through faith. Noonan points out that even though "a moral doctrine must be grasped affectively . . . and the meaning of the doctrine is grounded in a charity which escapes analysis,"[46] there is nonetheless

> a large amount of rational construction in the doctrine, . . . much of it is based on appeal to the experience of all men. The construction can be examined for its articulateness, its logic, its consistency. The appeal to experience can be tested for its accuracy and adequacy . . . . If only the bare bones of the doctrine appear, if the secret vital sap is still missing, the limitation may be noted without abandoning the task of rational analysis, indispensable if love of God and neighbor is to receive rational direction in an organized community.[47]

Noonan's analysis, imbued at once with faith and rationality, is illuminating for both is clarity and its scope.

An aspect of the Christianization of the West that is crucial to this discussion is the permeation of Christian charity into secular life. Natalie Zemon Davis' Society and Culture in Early Modern France[48] portrays a combination of religious and lay efforts to cope with poverty, mendicity, youthful rebellion and changing patterns of feminine dependence against a background of rising merchant power as the West transformed itself from a feudal agrarian society to a bourgeois capitalist one.

Closer to home is David Rothman's The Discovery of the Asylum,[49] which argues for a specifically American and republican response to deviant social behaviour in the early 1800s, a response that took the form of the invention of the asylum as a site of remedial as well as custodial care - an emphasis that was lost in later decades as incarceration was increasingly viewed as an end in itself in the effort

to cope with miscreants.

Rothman locates the discovery of the asylum in a combination of a faith in the "Enlightenment ideas that challenged Calvinist doctrines"[50] and an understanding of these ideas that was peculiarly American and post-revolutionary. Americans found the roots of deviancy to be not in the individual after all, Rothman maintains, but in the English colonial system of law and jurisprudence. The rejection of the pre-republican order is not dissimilar to the post-revolutionary social reforms in France that there accompanied Enlightenment ideas, and were embodied in the French Civil Code between 1796 and 1804.

The French connection is a necessary one, for if Americans "discovered" the asylum, in its modern form, that form might be said to have been elaborated if not quite invented, by the French. The medieval asylums were Catholic charitable hospices maintained by religious orders with some help from the state - in some cases -; they housed amorphously the aged, the infirm, the destitute, the mortally ill, the orphaned and the illegitimate. The nature of the asylum changed with the establishment of the General Hospital of Paris, a joint state and church undertaking, funded by the King with the assistance of private philanthropy and aristocratic patronage. Its clientele was differentiated as to cause of incarceration, with separate institutions, and somewhat different conditions, for the ill, the criminal, the insane, the destitute, unruly women and abandoned and orphaned children.[51] The Montreal Misericordia was to contain elements of both. Several French studies of social welfare before and after the Revolution document the history of the General Hospital of Paris: one is Camille Bloch's L'Assistance et L'Etat en France à la veille de la Révolution;[52] in English, there is Shelby T. McCloy's Government Assistance in

Eighteenth Century France.[53] These provide clear evidence that the asylum elaborated in France under the monarchy constitutes the model for the Misericordia, although the Montreal Order did retain some aspects of the older medieval form of the asylum.

Data Used in the Study

In its original conception this study was to deal primarily with the Misericordia in the Northwest mission at Edmonton. The Chronicles of the Edmonton Misericordia from 1900 to 1910 provide the primary material that documents the evolution of the Order in Alberta. These are newsletters that were written monthly to the Mother House by the sisters of all the outlying missions. There is no systematic recording of client cases. They contain brief daily entries recounting noteworthy events, and are available at the Misericordia Mother House in Lachine, Quebec.

Other primary materials include archival records from the Public Archives of Alberta, the Public Archives of Canada and the private archives of the Archdiocese of Edmonton, the Regional Centre of the Grey Nuns, and the Misericordia Mother House. Parish records from several Northern Albertan parishes were used to obtain illegitimacy rates, 1900-1904. Those scrutinized include the baptismal registers of St. Joachim parish in Edmonton, of St. Paul's Anglican Church in Fort Chipewyan and St. Luke's Anglican Church in Fort Vermillion. In addition, reports of the census returns from 1885, 1901 and 1906 were analyzed. Statutes, ordinances and other legislative materials from Quebec, Upper Canada, the Canadian Criminal Code and the Northwest Territories (later Alberta) provided a framework of official attitudes to marriage and domestic affairs. Law reports, as well, were useful in

what they demonstrate the judicial interpretations of legislated matters. In some cases personal communications were helpful, not so much perhaps in obtaining a data base, but in several instances in identifying the reasons why certain information is either unavailable or non-existent. The hagiographies and institutional histories of the Misericordia were in some instances useful. The Order's first historical accounting is given by Father A. Fournet in Mother de la Nativité and the Origin of the Community of the Sisters of Miséricorde,[54] published in 1899, which contains numerous direct quotations from original writings and regulations of the Order, and is in itself exemplary of Catholic attitudes in Quebec at the turn of the century. More contemporary are works by Barabe[55] and Auclair,[56] both ecclesiastical histories that emphasize the spiritual aspects of the Misericordia but provide useful details regarding the organization and expansion of the Order.

From these accounts, it appears that in Montreal attitudes towards unwed maternity were considerably more censorious than those postulated by Ward for Ontario. All the ecclesiastical accounts stress the outcast position of unmarried mothers; the rapid growth of the Montreal Misericordia attests to the social need for refuge for such women. How did these women manage pregnancy and childbirth? From the Misericordia accounts of the early career as a midwife of their founder, Rosalie Cadron Jette, whose religious title was Mère de la Maternité, it appears that, as from early Christian times, women in distress were frequently directed by parish priests to midwives whose role was to provide help not only during childbirth but also before; such women were charged with finding a secret place for the months preceding the accouchement.[57] In the eyes of the Church, if not society in general, unmarried pregnant

women were fallen women and sinners. They were, however, distressed and in need of God's mercy; the Church found it difficult to dismiss them, particularly if they were repentant, apart from which there were souls to be gained or re-gained if they and their offspring could be saved.

However difficult life was for unwed pregnant women, the real victims of stigma were their illegitimate children. Considerable numbers of these were abandoned in the streets, byways, privies and rivers of the city, to be rescued and brought to the Catholic orphanages whose open-door admission policies meant constant overcrowding. In 1867 Doctors A. Larocque and P. Carpenter, of the Montreal Sanitary Association, reported on the state of infants received by the infant home of the Grey Nuns in Montreal, praising the Sisters for their efforts to "lessen the social plague of infanticide"[58] that was so evident in the streets of the city. Of the six hundred and fifty-two infants received in that year by the home, three were dead on arrival; seven were alive but severely frost bitten; over four hundred were half naked and eight were completely unprotected from the elements. Eighteen had had no post-natal care whatever; thirteen were wounded and bleeding; forty-six were syphilitic and eight were drugged with opium. Over one hundred and fifty were actively suffering from disease of one sort or another. One baby was delivered in a suitcase, one in a basket, one in a pail and one in a nailed-shut box. Many were covered with vermin. It is hardly remarkable, given these circumstances, that only thirty-three of these children lived until the end of the year - a mortality rate of almost ninety per cent. Clearly it is a question of a very different beginning to life than that envisaged by Ward in his estimation of birth at home, and in the bosom of the mother's family, for the illegitimate child.[59] The reasons for these infant abandonments, the response of the

Misericordia and the evolution of that response when the Order expanded into Alberta, are the subject of the following chapters.

Method of Procedure

This chapter has provided a general introduction to the study, outlining the main problem and several secondary ones, and suggesting a number of themes that will link the content of succeeding chapters.

Chapter Two will review some historical perspectives on infanticide, illegitimacy and the rescue of children and mothers. Its purpose is to provide insight into the precedents for the Misericordia's institutional development. In origin, the work of the Misericordia derives from the efforts of early Churchmen to counter infanticidal customs of pagan and patriarchal antiquity. Throughout the Middle Ages these efforts prevailed, not always successfully. Eventually, in the convent hospitals of medieval Europe, and finally in the work of Vincent de Paul and the Sisters of Charity of the General Hospital of Paris, the Christian view that children must be saved, won out. Between these two institutional endeavours was a major shift in the nature of rescue: in the earlier, medieval charity, relief was offered to exposed or abandoned children, but no attempt was made to rescue the unborn illegitimate child from the prospect of death at the hands of its mother. However, by the seventeenth century, attempts at redemption and rehabilitation of the unwed mother meant not only the rescue of the unborn child from possible infanticide or abandonment, but the hope that future pregnancies would be avoided.

This rehabilitative form of institutional religious charity was in existence in France by the time colonial settlers crossed the Atlantic to establish their seigneuries and villages in New France.

Chapter Three furthers the discussion of the origins of the Misericorde by outlining the social, legal and religious conditions prevailing in Quebec and Montreal during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The beginnings of the Misericordia are outlined in this context. A description of the Order's internal organization demonstrates that the role of the Misericordia was truly a rehabilitative as well as a redemptive one. By the nineteenth century, religious benevolence in the care of foundlings incorporated a preventative element and used an educative strategy directed at the reform of unwed mothers and their acceptance of a sexually conforming morality as well as repentance for past sins. This chapter draws on Rooke and Schnell's "Childhood Ideology" to establish that the rehabilitative process relied on a symbolic return to childhood via the protection, separation, isolation and forced dependence of unmarried mothers when they entered the Misericordia hospice.

Chapter Four follows the Misericordia Sisters to Alberta in order to assess the impact of their work in surroundings different from the ones in which they originated. In Edmonton, the educational direction of their work was by no means abandoned, but its extent was considerably truncated in the shift of emphasis from the care of unwed mothers to general hospital nursing. This change in focus was the result of both socio-economic and ideological differences between the Sisters' old environment and the new. Attitudes to unmarried maternity were ambivalent in the Northwest, and among some groups of people illegitimacy was a negligible issue. Economic conditions and demographic circumstances allowed women a more favourable position generally than was the case in Eastern Canada, and attitudes towards unmarried maternity tended to be more tolerant. In the Franco-Catholic

community of St. Joachim illegitimacy rates were higher than has been recorded elsewhere in Canada, and high even compared to the European countries at this time; the evidence does not suggest, however, that this was the case elsewhere in Alberta. There appears to have been little need for institutional care for unwed mothers in Edmonton in 1900. On the other hand, the rapid transition of Edmonton from a frontier town in 1900 to a small but modern city by 1910, meant that the demand for general hospital and health care was urgent. To this need the Misericordia Sisters responded. The change in their focus from unwed mothers to hospital nursing was not unique to Edmonton, but neither was it a precedent set by the Mother House in Montreal. Rather, individual missions evolved in response to the particular needs of the community about them.

Limitations of the Study

As a whole, the study attempts to understand the origins of the work of a Catholic religious order in nineteenth century Quebec, and the evolution of the Order when transposed to Alberta. The interweaving of numerous themes seemed necessary to this understanding: the evidence of infanticide in the history of Western Society; its connection to illegitimacy; the nature of a society that has condoned, at any time, the killing of its young; the reaction of the Church to child-killing, and various manifestations of this response throughout many hundreds of years. A detailed study of a single institution has been sacrificed, then, to a more comprehensive approach that attempts to see that institution in the context of social conditions both past and present. In many ways this has meant an overly brief description of the actual work of the Misericordia. But the records of individual cases, of

specific women, their backgrounds, circumstances, and what happened to them after they left the Misericordia, are missing from the documental evidence in any case. The Chronicles of the Edmonton Misericordia, the only record in existence of the daily operations of the mission hospital, demonstrate clearly that a detailed record of cases, of personal history and individual circumstance, was not maintained. These letters are informal, familial and only sporadically devoted to the hospital clientele.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the main problem of the study as the shift in the interest of the Misericordia Sisters in Edmonton from the rehabilitation of unwed mothers to general nursing care. In order to understand this change in institutional direction, the study will attempt to discern the origins in the Catholic philanthropic tradition of the Misericordia and will trace the evolution of the order, starting with its Montreal beginnings in 1848, and paying particular attention to the establishment of the general Misericordia Hospital in Edmonton in 1906. The study will focus on the Christian response to child exposure, abandonment and murder; the institutionalization of that response by female religious orders, both in France and Quebec, and the evolution of this response from relief, in medieval France, to rehabilitation in nineteenth century Quebec. The study will focus on the educative role of the Misericordia in its dealings with unwed mothers, and will show the decline of that role relative to new directions in a climate that was indifferent to its particular reformist emphasis. Throughout, the concern is for attitudes to what has been termed sexual non-conformity in the face of rules and regulations, legitimated by church and state if

not always custom, restricting sexual intercourse, or reproductive activity, to marriage. The role of a religious institution established specifically to provide care for women who transgressed these rules is clearly of interest to those whose study is the ways in which we learn what those rules are and how they function. In this, it is hoped that the following chapters will constitute a small but worthwhile step in the pursuit of understanding the transmission of culture from one generation to another that Bernard Bailyn has defined as education.[60]

Notes - Chapter I

1 Sister Sainte - Mechtilde, "La Fille Mère et ses problèmes sociaux," unpublished dissertation, University of Montreal, Faculty of Social Services, 1934, p. 173.

2 See chapters by Anthea Newman, David Levine, Keith Wrightson, Christopher Smout, Daniel Scott, in Bastardy and its Comparative History, eds. Peter Laslett, Karla Oosterveen and Richard M. Smith, (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1980).

3 See for example Christopher Smout's "Aspects of Sexual Behaviour in Nineteenth Century Scotland" in Laslett et al, Bastardy, p. 214. The genesis of this argument seems to be in Frederick Engels', The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State, Intr. by Evelyn Reed (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1972). A useful discussion of the Marxist position as articulated by Engels is Gayle Rubin's "Traffic in Women - Notes on the Political Economy of Sex," in R. Reiter, ed., Towards An Anthropology of Women (New York: 1975).

4 Isaac Abt and Fielding Garrison, History of Pediatrics (Philadelphia and London: W.B. Saunders, 1965); Lloyd de Mause, ed., The History of Childhood (London: Souvenir Press, 1976); David Bakan, Slaughter of the Innocents (Toronto: Jossey - Bass, 1971); Louis Lallemand, Histoire des Enfants abandonnés et délaissés (Paris: Picard, 1885); W.L. Langer "Infanticide: A Historical Survey," History of Childhood Quarterly, 1973-74, pp. 354-387; W.E.H. Lecky, History of European Morals (New York: Braziller, 1955); John T. Noonan, Contraception: A History of Its Treatment by the Catholic Theologians and Canonists (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1965); Hélène Bergues, La Prévention des Naissances dans la Famille (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1960).

5 Noonan, pp. 532-533.

6 Bergues, p. 191.

7 B. Leeming, S.J., Principles of Sacramental Theology (London, 1956), p. 65. See also Matt. 26:28, Acts 2:38 and T.C. De Kruijf, The Bible on Sexuality (Wisconsin: De Pere, 1966), p. 67.

8 The apparent contradiction between the Christian opposition to the patria potestas and Christian support for the paternal authority will be discussed in Chapter II. The shift seems to have occurred about the time of Aquinas, who expressed the involvement of the father as a responsibility, rather then a right, however: " . . . in the human species, the male is required for the offspring's education, which is expected not only as to the nourishment of the body but more as to nourishment of the soul"; quoted by Jean-Louis Flandrin, Families in Former Times: Kinship, Household and Sexuality, trans. Richard Southern (Cambridge: University Press, 1979), p. 180.

[9] R.L. Schnell, "Ideology of Childhood: A Reinterpretation of the common School," British Journal of Educational Studies, 27 (February, 1979), pp. 7-27, and P.T. Rooke, "The Child Institutionalized in Canada, Britain and the United States: A Trans-Atlantic Perspective," The Journal of Educational Thought, II, (1977), pp. 156-171.

[10] Edward M. Shorter, Review of D. Bakan's Slaughter of the Innocents, History of Childhood Quarterly, I, (1973-74), p. 179.

[11] Philippe Ariès, Centuries of Childhood (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1962).

[12] See for instance Joy Parr's "Introduction" to Childhood and Family in Canadian History, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982), pp. 8-9. In arguing for the malleability of the family over time, Parr disagrees with Aries on one aspect of his argument, family structure, and does not broach the ideological change towards child life. See also Lawrence Stone, "Massacre of the Innocents," New York Review, November 14, 1974; and de Mause, p. 5.

[13] Rooke, "The Child Institutionalized," pp. 160-62.

[14] De Mause, "Evolution of Childhood," in History of Childhood, see note 4 above.

[15] R.L. Schnell, "Childhood as Ideology," pp. 7-28.

[16] Ibid.

[17] History of Childhood Quarterly, 1, 1973-74, pp. 353-365.

[18] Ibid., p. 355.

[19] Bergues, p. 191.

[20] Peter Laslett, Family Life and Illicit Love in Earlier Generations (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

[21] Ibid., pp. 3-6.

[22] Ibid., p. 53. The work of Keith Wrightson and David Levine is acknowledged by Laslett as generative of this hypothesis.

[23] Ibid., p. 3.

[24] Ibid., pp. 6 and 61.

[25] Jean-Louis Flandrin, Families in Former Times: Kinship, household and sexuality, translated from the French by Richard Southern, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

[26] Robert Wheaton and Tamara K. Hareven, Family and Sexuality in French History (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1980).

[27] Ibid., pp. 27-48.

[28] Ibid., pp. 49-84.

[29] Etienne van de Walle, "Illegitimacy in France during the nineteenth century," in Laslett, Bastardy, p. 264.

[30] Van de Walle, p. 265. "recognized" or "unrecognized."

[31] Ibid., p. 265.

[32] Jacques Donzelot, The Policing of Families (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974).

[33] Flandrin, Families, p. 242. The literature abounds with similar comments and evidence. See also Delasselle and Chamoux.

[34] Ivy Pinchbeck and Margaret Hewitt, Children in English Society, 2 vols, (London and Toronto: Routledge and Kegan Paul and the University of Toronto Press, 1973), 2:583.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Ruth K. McClure, Coram's Children: The London Foundling Hospital in the Eighteenth Century (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981).

[38] Pinchbeck and Hewitt, p. 613.

[39] Ibid., p. 604.

[40] Ibid., p. 613.

[41] Ibid., p. 584.

[42] Ibid. See also S.G. Checkland and E.O.A. Checkland eds., The Poor Law Report of 1834 (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974), pp. 258-274.

[43] Peter Ward, "Unwed Motherhood in Nineteenth Century English Canada," Canadian Historical Association Historical Papers (1981): 34-56.

[44] Ibid., p. 35.

[45] Bergues, p. 191.

[46] Noonan, Contraception, p. 3.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Natalie Zemon Davis, Society and Culture in Early Modern France (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975).

[49] David Rothman, The Discovery of the Asylum: Social Order and Disorder in the New Republic (Boston, Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1971).

[50] Ibid., p. 51.

[51] Roland Mousnier, Paris au Temps de Richelieu et de Mazarin (Paris: A. Pedone, n.d.), pp. 285-87.

[52] Camille Bloch, L'Assistance de l'Etat en France à la veille de la Révolution (Geneva: Slatkine-Megariotis Reprints, 1974, Reprint of Paris edition of 1908).

[53] Shelby T. McCloy, Government Assistance in Eighteenth Century France (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1946) chapters 9-12.

[54] F. Fournet, Mother de la Nativité and the Origin of the Community of the Sisters of Miséricorde (Montreal: Printing office for the society for Deaf Mutes, 1898).

[55] Paul Henri Barabé, Un Siècle de Miséricorde (Montreal: Les Soeurs de Miséricorde, 1948).

[56] E.-J. Auclair, Histoire des Soeurs de Miséricorde de Montréal, les premiers soixante-quinzeans de 1948 à 1923 (Montreal: Printing office of the Society for Deaf Mutes, 1928).

[57] Antoine Rey, Chaplain at the Hospice Sainte-Pélagie, 1846-1847, in "Notes on the origin of the Hospice," in Thérèse Gingras, ed., "A Nos Sources," Archives of the Misericordia, Lachine, Quebec, p. 1.

[58] Sister Suzanne Collette, s.g.m., "L'oeuvre des Enfants Trouvés, 1754-1946," unpublished dissertation, University of Montreal, Faculty of Social Services, 1948, p. 24.

[59] Ward, p. 18.

[60] Bernard Bailyn, Education in the Transformation of American Society (New York and Chapel Hill, W.W. Norton & Company Inc. and The University of North Carolina Press, 1960), p. 14.

CHAPTER II

Historical Perspectives on Illegitimacy, Foundling Care and Unwed Motherhood

Introduction

The aim of the Sisters of Misericordia in mid-nineteenth century Montreal was to provide physical, emotional and spiritual assistance, in the form of refuge and rehabilitation, to girls and women who were pregnant but unmarried. By so doing, the Order hoped to "save the honour of families, and above all make less frequent the dreadful crime of infanticide."[1] Unwed motherhood was seen to be, among a significant proportion of the population of mid-nineteenth century Montreal, both unacceptable and untenable. A woman alone seldom had the resources, or means of earning them, to support a child. Unwed mothers frequently found themselves alone, unemployed and indigent. Abandoning the child, which most frequently culminated in the death of the new-born infant, enabled the woman to avoid the humiliation of public recognition of her situation. More importantly, it overcame the virtually impossible economic situation she would be in if she chose to keep the child.

During the nineteenth century the frequency with which abandoned infants were found in Montreal streets and on church steps seriously alarmed the authorities.[2] The founding of the Misericorde in 1848 was a response to this concern.

As background to the work of the Misericordia, this chapter will provide, very broadly, some historical perspectives on the institutionalization of illegitimacy. The ideological roots of French Canada are European in both their secular and religious dimensions. Foundling homes and maternity hospitals have a long although largely uncharted history; in the question of social welfare the links between the old world and the new can be discerned through the charitable endeavours of the Catholic Church and its religious orders. It is

suggested that the Church, when it called for an end to ancient infanticidal practices, had to make some provisions for the unwanted children rescued through its influence. Such arrangements, by about the thirteenth century in some parts of Europe, were institutionalized as foundling hospitals, and by the seventeenth century, in France, as hospices for destitute women, including unwed mothers, as well as foundling hospitals.

Infanticide and Child Abandonment in the Ancient World

The prevalence of infanticide in European antiquity has been amply documented by historians of childhood.[3] There is abundant evidence from classical times of the selling, beating, mutilation, exposure, abandonment and killing of children of all ages. Paternal authority determined the fate of a child, as clear in this description of the Roman levana, or ritual "raising-up" of the newborn:

> At the birth of a child the ancient Romans had a well-known custom of taking the new-born, "still red from its mother's blood," as Ovid says, and placing it on the ground at its fathers feet. If the latter recognized the child and decided to take care of its needs, he would raise it up from the ground and take it in his arms. But if he doubted its legitimacy, if the child was misshappen or if the birth had been accompanied by bad omens, then he would not raise it up.[4]

Particularly when the child was misshapen, female or illegitimate, the father might invoke the patria potestas, and could choose life or death for children born into his household.

Earlier, a justification for the exposure of illegitimate children was made by the ancient Greeks, as indicated by Aeschylus (525-456 B.C.) in the Oresteia:

> The mother is no parent of that which is called her child, but only nurse of the new-planted seed that grows. The parent is he who mounts. A stranger she preserves the stranger's seed, if no god interfere.[5]

The true parent is not the mother but the father. Adultery for women is proscribed because it threatens to introduce into the family the blood of a stranger. The woman is merely the vehicle for reproduction, the soil in which the seed is planted,[6] to use the agricultural metaphor of the gynaecologist Soranus (2nd century A.D.). In a society where hereditary property in the male line is the primary determinant of status and prestige, marital fidelity for the wife is a necessary condition of the reproductive aspect of family life. A child born outside the marriage tie could be exposed or abandoned as a means of ensuring the continuity of the male line.

This attitude, clearly demonstrated in the writings of classical antiquity, is a recurring theme in the history of the family. Although Western society is in essence patriarchal, however, today infanticide is no longer seen as an acceptable means of preserving patriarchal rights; respect for human life includes child and infant life. From the widespread acceptance of infanticide to its condemnation, the first visible indicator of this shift was the initiatives of the early Christians to abolish the practice of infanticide.

Christian Opposition to Infanticide

The first recorded instances of real opposition to child exposure and abandonmment come to us in the writings of the early Christian fathers who challenged the social structure of the Romanized Mediterranean world. It has been suggested that Churchmen tried to

disengage paternal authority by "depriving fathers of the right to kill and sell their children."[7] In order to understand Christian action in this regard, some consideration of the Judaic context of Christianity as well as a brief look at Christian theology may be helpful.

Among the Jews there seems to be little evidence of infanticide, although historians are divided on this question. De Mause and Bakan[8] include the Israelites in their lists of peoples who routinely slaughtered infants. The evidence seems to rest on the story of Abraham and Isaac, but the point of that tale is not the fact that the father was willing to sacrifice his son, but that in the end God, having seen Abraham's obedience to Him, commanded him not to kill Isaac. Lecky, Noonan and Abt-Garrison[9] make no reference to infanticide among the Hebrews; Lallemand cites the double criminality of infanticide - killing a child and diminishing the race - and Langer maintains that Rabbinical Law interpreted infanticide as murder even though it was not named as such in Judaic law. Bergues also denies infanticide among the Jews.[10]

This view is consistent with the Old Testament emphasis on regeneration. "Go forth and multiply" was God's first commandment. Marriage and fecundity were favourably regarded among people whose safety was seen to depend on numbers. Illegitimate children were the "true offspring of an unlawful union";[11] they were unrighteous but were nevertheless circumcised and therefore members of the community through the covenant represented by circumcision.

In the New Testament, the potential for the creation of Christian souls was inherent in human fertility, so to deny the natural outcome of that fertility through mechanical devices, magic potions, abortion or infanticide was seen to be contrary to God's design.[12] God creates souls, Constantine would later affirm, for life not death.[13] Moreover

the meaning of the Christian Covenant is that all baptised children belong to God. Whereas the Hebrew Covenant of circumcision indicates membership in the tribe, Christian baptism indicates an affiliation to God through Jesus Christ that takes precedence over all wordly relationships, even parental ones. The real father of baptised Christians is God,[14] which makes natural parents esentially guardians or foster-parents who do not have the right to dispose of their offspring as they see fit.

With respect to illegitimate children it should be noted that in the Christian view concupiscence is evil, and sexual relations are made good through the procreative purpose sanctified in marriage. All children but particularly those born of illicit unions are born in sin. Baptism, however, accords grace and remission from sin. This perspective increased the concern of the Christian fathers for the rescue of abandoned children, for only through baptism subsequent to such rescue could the souls of these children be saved.

The early Church Fathers made repeated attempts to condemn, legislate against and forbid killing of children, but with doubtful results. Tertullian (200 A.D.) is said to have observed in a sermon that although the faithful "are forbidden by laws to slay new-born infants, it so happens that no laws are evaded with more impunity or greater safety . . . ."[15] Attempts were made at both punishment and prevention.[16] In 315, we are told, Constantine issued an edict to Italy and Roman Africa ordering that economic aid be given to indigent parents so as to encourage them to rear their children rather than abandon them. All foundlings were to become slaves of those who rescued them, without fear of reclamation by the natural parents, who, previous to this, often turned up later, when the infant had grown into a gainfully employed

adolescent.

Poor parents unable to care for their children were to be permitted to sell them into slavery, so as to discourage exposure and abandonment as well as infanticide.[17] The length of the list of rulers who passed subsequent legislation prohibiting the killing and sale of children is in itself testimony to the failure of the decree to end infanticide.[18]

Although the Christian Church, then, "opposed the paternal power when it ran counter to God's will,"[19] historians have suggested that the infiltration of Christian mores and values into secular medieval society was a slow process. Common belief seemed to be impervious to a formalized doctrinal system:

> Catholicism was still very far from having completely defined its dogmatic system . . . . Moreover, in the ill-defined borderland where Christian heresy degenerated into a religion actively opposed to Christianity, . . . the most notable fact was that Catholicism had incompletely penetrated among the common people . . . . Never was theology less identified with the popular religion as it was felt and lived.[20]

The impact of Christian opposition to infanticide then must be seen in the light of a thousand years of tension between the Church and a feudal society only incompletely acculturated to Christian beliefs and values.

Charity in the Middle Ages

Evidence regarding infanticide during the early Middle Ages is scanty. Bergues observes that it is impossible to divorce the discussion of infanticide from that of abortion and contraception in the Christian commentaries. All were mortal sins, requiring penitence of anywhere from thirty days fast to fifteen years bread and water. Theologians distinguished, however, between "a poor woman who does this

(abortion) because of the difficulty of rearing the child and a prostitute who desires to 'hide her perversity'."[21]

Bergues' comment on the theologians is of fundamental importance to the understanding of the Misericordia's efforts in female reform: The Penitential ecclesiasts, she observes,

> are of incontestable interest. They appear in the sixth century, after the era of public confession and of the public penitence of the early Christians. At the end of the invasions that the franco-roman world, they formed the basis of religious discipline, during the transition from paganism to Christianity. They revealed the faults of man and society in the dark ages as well as the ideals of monks and priests who bore the responsibility for the guidance of souls. Confession to a priest and penance became, about the sixth century, private and secret in character, and the Council of Latran, in 1215, was to make them universally obligatory. Very severe penances (sometimes the penitents died of hunger and other rigours as well as fasts) were conceived as curatives for the soul and offered to sinners the means to rehabilitate themselves and to reestablish harmonious relations with Christian society.[22]

With respect to the more practical aspects of the generational and reproductive sphere of life, there is some evidence to suggest that infanticide during the Middle Ages was not treated from the confessional manuals (as a distinct crime, and not subsumed under contraception and abortion) because economic conditions rendered children valuable for their labour. Historians have suggested that the vagaries of landholding arrangements for serfs were such that "the tenant was sometimes in absolute need of offspring, especially on those manors where the lord took everything at a childless man's death."[23] The custom of wife-lending was common practice when all else failed to beget children:

> If a man have no child, he shall carry his wife on his back over at least nine hedges from his own house, and there find some other man to raise up an heir for him; or in the last resort, bring her to market for that purpose.[24]

These arrangements suggest a dearth rather than surplus of children among the common people. The matter of the numbers of children who survived the rigours of infant life in the Middle Ages may not however be a reliable indicator of attitudes to, or treatment of children. The earliest known foundling hospital, that of Archbishop Dateus of Milan, was founded in 787,[25] indicating that not all children were so desired as those whose fathers were "borrowed" over nine hedges. The extent of child abandonment and of infanticide in the first few centuries of Christian foray into pagan Europe is unknown and possibly unknowable.

Historians note, however that foundling care dates back to the third century of Christianity when the Church fathers who prohibited infanticide invited the faithful to leave their children on the steps of the Church rather than abandon them elsewhere, a practice which found immediate favour and which continued into the twentieth century. The first foundling hospital known to historians was that of Datheus, Archbishop of Milan, founded in 787; it was established with the declaration that

> I Datheus, for the welfare of my soul and the souls of my associates, do hereby establish in the house that I have bought next to the Church, a hospital for foundling children. My wish is that as soon as a child is exposed at the door of a church it will be received in the hospital and confided to the care of those who will be paid to look after it.[26]

The motive is Christian caritas, or charity; "suffer all the little children to come onto me," Christ had said; those who wished to emulate His ways were obligated to assist the faithful who were in need. Similar hospitals existed throughout Europe in the Middle Ages, but little is known about them.

The French historian C. Billot has investigated the surviving records of one early foundling hospital, the Aumône Notre Dame of

Chartres, financial records for which date back to 1349.[27] He relates that the original charter, dated 1070, states as its purpose:

> Héberger les povres trespassans, donner boire et manger à tous povres malades, encevelir les mors, morrir [sic] et alimenter povres gesines, povres enffans trouves nourrir, gouverner, mettre à mestier et les filles marier et avecques ce, faire oudit lieu le service divin.[28]

Initially, the care of foundlings was a minor part of the work of the Aumône. For more than a century after the first financial evidence appears, the acounting for monies paid to wet-nurses for the care of abandoned children took up no more each year than a small entry under "Mises Extraordinaires."[29] By 1478, however, the list of nurses' salaries required an entire paragraph headed "Autre mise faicte pour la nourriture de petits enfants trouvés et délaissés."[30] By the sixteenth century the abandonment of children had become so common in Chartres - as in other cities of France - that the municipal authorities passed regulations forbidding their citizens to leave children in the churches or elsewhere. It was apparent that the Aumône was experiencing severe difficulty coping with the heavy demands placed on its services by the number of foundlings it had to look after.

In Chartres it appears that the financial responsibility was shared by parish and municipal authorities. Amicable division of such obligations were not always readily achieved. In 1431, for example, it has been noted that the magistrates of Paris refused to support the Maison de la Crèche for the abandoned children of Notre-Dame parish, claiming that it was the particular concern of the Bishop and the Chapter of Notre-Dame.[31]

Finally, in an effort to stem the number of abandonments the Aumône instituted a system of rewards given for information that would permit

them to return an abandoned child to its own mother. Efforts were made, Billot relates, to claim maintenance and support from the father of the child. In a procedure remarkably reminiscent of the Roman levana the village midwife is said to have presented herself, three days after the birth of the child born out of wedlock, at the house of the putative father, with the baby. If the man accepted the charge of paternity he took the child in his arms. If not, the mother could initiate action against him in the civil courts.[32] The stigma of illegitimacy and unwed motherhood was apparently not so great as to preclude officialdom from taking up the case on the child's behalf, if only to prevent further expense to the public purse. The meagreness of amounts paid, however, and perhaps the infrequency of such payments, evidently made it desirable for women to dispose of the children by abandoning them at the Church rather than to try to support them without a husband.

What happened to the children who grew up in the protection of the Aumône? Billot recounts that by the fifteenth century the child, upon reception at the Aumône, was immediately baptised and then sent out to be wet-nursed, on average for fifteen months. Many children who survived the journey to the countryside where nurses generally resided did not live through the rough treatment, and the meagre milk supply, of a nurse who cared for two, three or more babies. Any who survived were, after weaning, returned to the Aumône, where they stayed until they were about ten years old. There is little evidence of any education in the Aumône or instruction other than oral. It is safe to assume they were taught the catechism; some may have learned to read, but writing was at this time a skill reserved for those destined for clerical vocations. Boys were apprenticed to artisans and craftsmen. Billot notes that efforts were made to find husbands for the girls, marriage being

permitted for women at age eleven and a half.[33] Other sources indicate that domestic service was the foremost occupation of young girls in both the countryside and the cities,[34] so most girls could probably have expected to be placed in service.

The Aumône of Chartres was not unique in its service to the community as a foundling hospital; other such hostels existed in towns throughout France as early as the thirteenth century. Lallemand cites a Papal Bull of 1372 enumerating more than one hundred houses of l'Ordre Hospitalier du Saint-Esprit de Montpelier, an order founded specifically to care for the poor and for foundlings,[35] the term for children and infants actually abandoned in the streets and fields, and whose parentage was unknown.

By the fifteenth century there appears to have been a rather sudden increase in the incidence of abandoned children in the cities of Europe. Billot cites as a reason for this a generalized demographic instability that depopulated the land during the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries. Plagues such as the Black Death, smallpox epidemics, the Hundred Years War, the English occupation of France and wars of reconquest, all contributed, during this early period, to a dearth of manpower that may have caused children to be seen as a boon rather than a burden and thus less likely to be killed at birth. On the other hand, Billot suggests that post-1400s increase in abandonment and growth in orphanages, may indicate a real change in mental attitude. For, if prior to the 1400s, the relatively low incidence of abandonment was due to a greater use of infanticide as a family limitation strategy, then a shift from infanticide to abandonment can be read as an intensification of sentiment in favour of children.

Efforts to provide publicly for abandoned children persisted, and

did so in the face of protestations by the authorities that to harbour these children could prove dangerous to the public morality. It was feared that people might reject all semblance of responsibility for their own children, if they saw that these would receive care in public institutions. In spite of this perceived threat to both the public purse and the public morals, the care of abandoned children in foundling hospitals was established, although on a limited basis, in France by the fifteenth century.

The rise of foundling hospitals in medieval Europe has been said to represent a shift in attitude towards children, a 'softening' in outlook that embodies a greater concern for human life and for the potentiality of new life that generates protective and formative treatment. Lallemand cites prohibitions in early medieval "Maisons de Dieu" against the reception of abandoned or exposed children (Pueri inventi non recipientur in domo nostra) and the emergence of the hospitals intended for illegitimate children rather than orphans, as indicative of an identifiable change in the treatment of the most vulnerable children, those recognized by no father.[36]

During the Middle Ages, it has been suggested, the Church in France was not alone in the exercise of concern for the relief of urban poverty. The acceptance of public responsibility for poor relief in late medieval and early modern Europe had diverse support from a number of groups all concerned with the containment of begging and the provision of relief and rehabilitation for the most desperate. Famine, brought on by inefficient agricultural methods, inadequate transportation and the hoarding of grain by speculators, had much to do with the urban poverty of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries which saw the proliferation of a mendicant population no longer regarded as

the "deserving poor." Poverty, furthermore, "was not shamefaced, did not remain quietly behind closed shutters; instead it poured into the streets with begging, noise, crime, threat of disease and rioting."[37] Beggars were often children, for the poor had little hesitation about sending their children out to plead for alms when times were hard. Even children from orphan asylums were sent out to beg in the streets. The well-to-do complained of "the great number of little children crying and hooting with hunger and cold day and night through the town, making a marvellous racket in the churches, disturbing the devotion of the people . . . ."[38]

With the perceived rapid growth, in the late medieval period, of the mendicant class, there was a gradual transformation of attitude from compassion "into fear and horror" when it was felt that "the poor were overwhelming us with their clamour and laments . . . outside our doors."[39] Poverty, with its incipient violence, was seen to threaten "not only physical and spiritual health, but also property and power." The resulting poor relief reforms doled out food and money as a means of preventing social disruption. The reforms were initiated by combinations of lawyers, government officials, tradespeople, and churchmen. Merchants of the early modern period perceived that it might be good economy in the long run to distribute relief funds to an increasingly unruly population of beggars. Despite these efforts, however, - or because of them - the poor had "to accept as a fact of life the unwillingness of all authorities to view higher real wages as a possible solution to poverty."[40]

In terms of practical solutions, however, to the problem of how to provide relief from misery and protection to the property-owning classes, the Church had an organization eminently suitable to the

establishment of hospices to house and care for the poor. The convent tradition was associated with the mendicant orders from the beginning, and poverty continued to be one of the foremost vows of religious life, to which the extension of charity to the poor came as a natural corollary. Both male and female religious houses provided ready made institutional environments with sets of rules ordering behaviour, an established chain of command, and in some cases funding based on donations as well as a pool of volunteer labour in the persons of the religious. The professed not only saw it as their duty to serve the poor and share with them the fruits of their labour, but what is more were forbidden by their own vows of poverty to receive payment for their services. The moral obligation that was perceived to be the domain not exclusively but primarily of the church in the exercise of charity was on occasion a convenient excuse for secular authorites to decline to contribute to the maintenance of welfare institutions. It appears that whereas private secular donations were available for generalized philanthropic purposes, the care of neglected and abandoned children in late medieval and early modern France devolved increasingly upon religious institutions. It cannot be said that it was Christian doctrine alone that occasioned the apparent change in values towards infant life. The Church, however, assumed responsibility for the result. The exercise of charity in the late Middle Ages was extension of the Christian concept of caritas, exercised in response to increasing mendicity and the growing threat to the social order posed thereby. Up until the seventeenth century in France, however, it appears that the care of abandoned children in hôtels-dieux or hôpitaux-généraux was not widely differentiated from a general philanthropic effort to provide relief to individuals unable to care for themselves. There were a

limited number of hostels that would accept illegitimate children. These charitable institutions, aimed at the rescue and relief from indigence of foundlings, operated with some financial support from secular sources but were primarily maintained by religious orders. They are representative of a seminal movement towards, rather than a widespread example of, the institutionalization of children in specialized foundling hospitals that was to occur in France on a large scale only subsequent to the founding of the General Hospitals by Louis XIV.

The Emergence of a Rehabilitation Model: The General Hospital of Paris

The evolution of specialized institutions for the rescue of abandoned children has been traced to the charitable religious institutions of the middle ages. It has been suggested by at least one historian, however, that these charity hospitals or hostels, which were usually supported primarily by the church, with varying contributions from municipal authorities later, proved inadequate to the demands of a larger, and seemingly more miserable, population.[41] The following discussion will show how, with the establishment by the French Crown of the General Hospital of Paris in 1656, an era began in which the rescue and relief of abandoned children was to be supplemented by institutionalized efforts to reform or rehabitate mothers thought to be likely perpetrators of future abandonment. The numbers of foundlings in French institutions rose to new highs in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in response to the dramatic increase in illegitimate births. The categorization of different classes of the general poor into deserving and undeserving asylum inmates can be dated from this time, as

can the institutionalization of various classes of wayward women into the hopelessly debauched and unfortunate but redeemable victims of circumstance. The tendency to classify women in this manner is a crucial element in understanding the evolution of the educative, or rehabilitative role that the Misericordia Sisters were to play in nineteenth century Canada.

Historians have written volumes about how, throughout Europe during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, unusually severe winters, heavy flooding, outbreaks of fire, epidemics of bubonic plague, typhoid and epizootics, exacerbated the misery of the common people.[42] By the 1650s, Paris is said to have had 41,000 beggars, of whom no more than about six thousand could be accommodated in charity hospitals.[43] It was in response to such conditions, and the threat posed to the social order by a large mendicant population, that Louis XIV was moved to establish a system of asylums to care for the various classes of dependent poor.44

At the same time as socio-economic conditions afflicting the poor made necessary the establishment of generalized relief, other factors were active which influenced the provisions made for the care of illegitimate children.

Undoubtedly related to the threat posed to the social order by the hordes of poor was an aspect of the revival in French culture of classical laws, values, styles and customs. At the same time, under Louis XIV, Parisians of the upper class were subject to "a furor of pleasure, enjoyment, luxury and leisure"[45] - echoes of which touched in some measure the whole population. Wealth, if possible inherited family wealth, was the requisite commodity for active life at Versailles. It is not surprising that during this period of absolute monarchy the secular law caused fathers to "recover . . . most of the rights granted

them by the ancient Roman laws."[46] Their power over the person and the property of their children and grandchildren was reinstated, for estates could be held together, and operated more profitably, if they were not divided by unproductive marriage settlements.

Anxious to maintain its viability in an era of secular humanism flourishing under a revival of the classical literature and in a social climate where the need for imposed order seemed increasingly clear, the Catholic Church was forced to abandon its longstanding hostility to the principle of paternal authority. From the time of the Council of Trent (1598) the family was reinforced as "both a subject and an object of government," and the father was perceived to be "accountable for its members."[47] At the same time, traditional and Counter-Reformationist forces within the Church worked to tighten the bonds between Christian ideals and popular behaviour by reinforcing sin as a regulating element in marital and reproductive affairs.[48] Infanticide, as well as abortion and contraception were subject to renewed interest by the Catholic Church subsequent to this time.

That illegitimacy in France rose from the end of the seventeenth century is a phenomena both generally accepted and much debated by historians; the reasons for the trend are by no means clear. Shorter, in The Making of the Modern Family views increased illegitimate births as reflective of the "modernization" of western society, and in particular of the sentimentalization of personal relationships that included greater sexual freedom for the young.[50] Flandrin, revising a previous inclination to follow the same route, suggests four factors as influential in the upward swing in illegitimacy after 1700: these are the rise of age at marriage and the increasing emphasis on clerical celibacy; the repression of peasant customs of free courtship that

involved sexual but non-coital activity; the closing of the municipal brothels in towns; and the migration of poor girls to the towns in search of work.[51] Other historians focus attention on the decline in marital fertility, the decline in infant mortality, improved diet, changing patterns of stillborn births and mortality, post-natal legitimation of children, consensual union, and variations in contraceptive practice. Variations in illegitimacy indices and ratios also reflect different behavioural patterns and incidence of bastardy in rural and urban populations, national, regional and local groups, social classes, religious backgrounds, making accurate generalizations problematic.

Whatever the causes may have been, one aspect of rising illegitimacy was that receptions into foundling hospitals increasingly dealt with children who were not abandoned in the usual sense (i.e. exposed or left at the hospital door, in the streets or in churches), but were delivered to the hospital by the mother, a relative or the attending midwife.[52] Even before the eighteenth century rise in illegitimacy, illegitimate children in Paris formed the largest element of a swelling mendicant population, collectively constituting one category among many of the jobless, ailing, insane, criminal, homeless, unfed people - in other words "the poor." From 1700 on, this situation intensified.

In response to the plight of the poor, and in an attempt to minimize the threat they posed to the social order, Louis XIV created, in 1656, the General Hospital of Paris, and in 1662, similar institutions in other French cities.[53] These were to be financed by the state, administered by state officials and councils appointed by the Crown, but operated with the assistance of various religious orders. The Crown's senior administrator, Colbert, is reported to have perhaps begun, in

terms of institutionalized relief, the long-standing tradition of distinction between the deserving and the undeserving poor. He stated his objectives to be "to put an end to begging and vagabondage 'by obliging the worthy poor to work and the others to let themselves be maintained in hospices which would be regulated under a severe discipline.'"[54]

The royal edict of 1656 created an umbrella administration responsible for overseeing the different sections of the Hospital: Notre Dame de la Pitié, Saint-Denis de la Salpêtrière, St. Jean du Bicêtre, Sainte-Marthe de Scripion and the Savonnerie. Each of these could theoretically receive several thousand people.[55] The inmates worked in various manufacturing enterprises, for which they were paid one third of what they earned, the rest going to room and board. The charter of the Hospital specified that the poor lodging there would "work in the manufactures, learning and exercising a vocation suitable to their age, strength and sex."[56] Inmates were separated from the larger society, deprived of their autonomy and given prescribed activities. By the end of the eighteenth century these state-funded General Hospitals housed about two thirds of all France's asylum inmates; the other one third were maintained, we are told, in private charitable hospitals and "hôtels-dieux," which by 1789 numbered over fourteen hundred.[57] By then, the Hospital in Paris had 12,000 inmates in eight subsidiary institutions, and was responsible for an estimated 15,000 foundling children placed with nurses in the countryside.[58]

At first the elderly, the young, the sick, the dying, the criminal and the children were all housed together. It was soon observed, however, that to put hardened criminals in the same hostel as victims of misfortune corrupted the latter but did nothing to improve the former,

so the various institutions were soon given a special character. The following description of the Salpêtrière reveals the manner of distinction between categories of wayward women:

> The Salpêtrière is the largest hospital in Paris and perhaps in Europe: this hospital is both a house for women and a prison (maison de force); it admits pregnant women and girls, wet nurses with their charges; male children from seven or eight months to four or five years of age; young girls of all ages; old women and aged married men; raving madmen, imbeciles, epileptics, paralytics, blind persons, cripples, ringworm sufferers, incurables of every sort, children with scrofula, etc.
>
> At the center of this hospital is a detention house (maison de force) for women, consisting of four different prisons: le commun, for the most dissolute girls; la correction, for those not hopelessly depraved; la prison, reserved for persons held by order of the king; and the grande force, for women branded by (courts of) justice.
>
> I have seen at the Salpêtrière as many as eight thousand persons; all this crowd is distributed by dormitories (i.e. wards) in the buildings, which have three floors in addition to the ground-floor (rez-de-chaussée).[60]

This differentiation between the worthy and the unworthy poor, hinging not only on the subject's degree of debauchery but also on the hope for her improvement, or "correction," for rehabilitation is reminiscent of convent care for penitant women, the magdalenes of women's religious orders, and also is a key indicator of the character of female reform houses that would flourish in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The foundling hospitals represent another phase of this institutional specialization. The Maison de la Couche is a good example. In 1670 the reformer Vincent de Paul obtained 15,000 pounds and the Chateau de Bicêtre from the King, who established by Edict the maternity home that was to be staffed by the Sisters of Charity, managed by the administration of the General Hospital and funded by a combination of royal subsidies, tax exemptions, state lotteries and internally generated revenues.[61] It should be noted here, as it has

been elsewhere,[62] that conditions in the foundling hospital were improved with the money of the King but that the charity came from of St. Vincent de Paul and his followers.[63]

The clients were women from other sections of the Hospital who were pregnant or nursing mothers. In 1680 the Maison de la Couche was joined to the Hospital of the Children of God, which itself had previously merged with the House of the Red Children, a foundling home established in 1536 under François I. The French Parliament paid 15,000 pounds yearly for the upkeep of the maternity home. The Sisters of Charity, who had staffed the House of the Red Children under the aegis of the monarchy, at the instigation of St. Vincent de Paul, in 1536, continued their work when it was joined to the maternity home. The home was administered, however, by a governing council of state officials, and even the appointment of the Mother Superior of the Order was subject to ratification by the council.[64]

As had been the case at the Aumône Notre-Dame of Chartres, a routine procedure at the institution was that the foundling child was first baptized, then sent out to a wet-nurse, often to the countryside. The nurse was paid a salary for the care of the child. Eventually, if the child lived and the nurse so desired, a salary as a foster parent was paid. Otherwise the child was sent back to the institution after weaning and usually given a rudimentary education before being apprenticed out, encouraged to join the religious order, frequently as a domestic, or, for girls, sent elsewhere into domestic service. The purposes of foundling hospitals remained the same over six hundred years: the rescue of abandoned children and the prevention of infanticide by mothers who were unable to care for a child born outside the protective circle of the family. Similarly, when they were

established, maternity homes for unwed mothers in France and New France were intended to prevent infanticide and to protect the honour of the family by providing a safe and secret harbour for the birth of illegitimate children.

What changed, however, between the thirteenth century Aumône de Chartres and the seventeenth century Hôpital Général de Paris was the focus on the mother, and the possibility of "saving" her - in the temporal as well as spiritual sense, - from a debauched life. In the earlier period the emphasis was on the child. When in the seventeenth century the mothers were drawn to the maternity from the other sections of the Hospital, it was recognized that some of these were victims of circumstance and misfortune, and that with some encouragement they might learn the error of their ways and return to society to resume their appropriate place. There was increased focus on the mother and on the possibility of saving her from further falling into a life of sin. Rehabilitation as a response to unwed maternity had its first flowering in the differentiated institutions of the General Hospital of Paris.

More important than the idea of restraint, in the maternity, was the notion of rehabilitation in a shape not wholly defined but clearly discernible. The study of the General Hospital of Paris appears to have received relatively little attention from social historians, even though as an early example of institutionalized social welfare on a model of mixed state, religious and philanthropic initiative its example is without precedent in France. Only with a major study will claims as to its significance in the evolution of child rescue and maternal rehabilitation be tenable; in the meantime it can be suggested only tentatively, that the Hopital General de Paris was the first major western institutionalized experiment in the rehabilitation (as opposed

to the relief and rescue) of the poor. In the routine of work, of industry perceived to be salutary and imposed with a variable degree of force, the emphasis was not on the doing alone, but also and more significantly, on learning, even though it was the social order as a whole, the community, that was thus to be served, rather than a notion of individual self-interest.[65]

This chapter has established the Franco-Catholic origins of the work of the Misericordia by tracing briefly the opposition of Churchmen to infanticide and child abandonment from early Christian times to early modern France. The Church extended charity (both physical relief and spiritual/moral support) to the needy, and particularly, to abandoned children. Foundling hospitals have existed from early times. Unmarried mothers have long been provided refuge in convents, but not in any way that differentiated them from the mass of the poor. Specialized care for unwed mothers in an institutional setting seems to have begun when the General Hospital of Paris, established in 1656, distinguished between worthy and unworthy unwed mothers. This established the precedent for the later perception, in Quebec, of unwed mothers and their offspring as either sinners or victims of misfortune, liable to reformation as well as redemption. In nineteenth century Montreal, the restraints imposed on unwed mothers by dint of enforced institutional separation from society served on the one hand to intensify the stigma that was seen to necessitate that distancing in the first place. On the other hand this process was viewed, by the Church at least, as one of rehabilitation as well as rescue, albeit a reform measured in singularly Christian terms. Herein lie the origins of the educative role of the Sisters of Misericordia.

Notes - Chapter II

1 Thérèse Gingras, S.M., "Notre Charisme de Soeurs de Miséricorde: Aux Sources Premières . . ." (Lachine: Soeurs de Miséricorde, 1979). Available from the Archivist at the Misericordia Mother House, Lachine, Quebec.

2 Sister Suzanne Collette, p. 24.

3 De Mause, "Evolution"; Isaac Abt and Fielding Garrison, History of Pediatrics (Philadelphia and London: W.B. Saunders, 1965); Lloyd deMause, ed., The History of Childhood (London: Souvenir, 1976); David Bakan, Slaughter of the Innocents (Toronto: Jossey-Bass, 1971); Louis Lallemand, Histoire des Enfants abandonnés et délaissés (Paris: Picard, 1885); W.L. Langer, "Infanticide: A Historical Survey," History of Childhood Quarterly, 1973-74, pp. 354-387; W.E.H. Lecky, History of European Morals (New York: Braziller, 1955); John T. Noonan, Contraception: A History of Its Treatment by the Catholic Theologians and Canonists (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965); J.-F. Therme and J.-B. Monfalcon, Histoire des Enfants Trouvés (Paris: Paulin, 1840).

4 Nicole Belmont, "Levana, or How to Raise Up Children," in Family and Society: Annales, ed. O. Ranum and E. Forster (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1976), p. 1.

5 Quoted in M. Arthur's "Liberated Women: The Classical Sea," in Becoming Visible: Women in European History, ed. Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977), p. 64.

6 Until the discovery of the mechanics of ovulation in 1827 most theories of procreation emphasized the semen as generative of the essentially human characteristics.

7 Abt-Garrison, p. 41.

8 De Mause, "Evolution of Childhood," in History of Childhood, p. 27 and Bakan, p. 28.

9 See note 3, above.

10 Lallemand, p. 21, and Langer, "Survey," p. 355; see also Hélène Bergues, La Prévention des Naissances dans la Famille, Ses Origines dans les temps modernes (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1960), p. 164.

11 Apocrypha, The Wisdom of Solomon, 3:16-19.

12 Abt-Garrison, pp. 55-56 and Noonan, p. 90.

13 H. Leclercq, "Alumni," Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie, p. 1302.

14 Matt. 23:9 - "Call no man your father upon the earth; for one is your Father, which is in heaven."

[15] Abt-Garrison, p. 56. In the 4th and 5th centuries, Constantine, Valentinium, Valens, Gratian, Theodosius, Honorius, Arcadias, Theodosius II and Valentinium III, were emperors who ruled against child exposure.

[16] Abt-Garrison, p. 42; Bergues, p. 164: "Au debut du Christianisme l'Eglise eut à lutter pour protéger la vie de l'enfant contre les effets d'une mentalité qui en faisait généralement peu de cas...."

[17] Abt-Garrison, p. 42.

[18] Abt-Garrison, p. 55.

[19] Jean-Louis Flandrin, Families in Former Times: Kinship, Household and Sexuality, trans. Richard Southern (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 134.

[20] Marc Bloch, Feudal Society, trans. L.A. Manyon, (Chicago: Phoenix Books, 1964), pp. 82-83.

[21] Bergues, p. 195, from Bede, eighth century penitential, as quoted in John T. McNeill and Helena M. Gamer, Medieval Handbooks of Penance. A translation of the principal libris penitentialis and selection from related documents (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938), p. 197.

[22] Bergues, p. 195.

[23] G.G. Coulton, Medieval Village, Manor and Monastery (New York: Harper and Row, n.d., first published 1925 as The Medieval Village, p. 250.

[24] Coulton, p. 524.

[25] Abt-Garrison, p. 58.

[26] Ibid.

[27] C. Billot, "Les Enfants abandonnés à Chartres à la fin du moyen âge, "Annales de Démographie historique," 1975, pp. 167-186.

[28] As quoted in Billot from the Royal Ordinance that succeeded the authority of the feudal barons in Chartres: "To shelter the poor and the vagrant, to nourish the indigent sick, to bury the dead, feed and aid the crippled, for poor children find food, govern and educate them, find vocations or for the girls find husbands, and by all that perform divine service", p. 168.

[29] Billot, p. 168.

[30] Billot, p. 168.

[31] H. Gourdon de Genouillac, Paris à travers les siècles: Histoire de Paris et des Parisiens (Paris: F. Roy, Editeur, 1880), Vol. I, p. 388.

[32] Billot, p. 170, from Mme. Lefèbvre-Teillard, Les Officialités à la veille du Concile de Trente, (Paris: 1973) thèse de Droit, pp. 214-217. Numerous examples of such action are provided by Beatrice Gottlieb in "The Meaning of Clandestine Marriage", in Tamara and Wheaton, Family and Sexuality in French History (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press: 1980), pp. 49-83.

[33] Flandrin, p. 131.

[34] J. Scott and L. Tilly, Women, Work and Family (New York: Holt Rinehart, 1978), p. 35. Lallemand, however, notes that in 1516 children in the hopital des enfants trouvés at Douai were taught to read, write and work (p. 123).

[35] Lallemand, p. 125; Bergues, p. 166, n. 13.

[36] Ibid., pp. 122-23.

[37] Natalie Zemon Davis, Society and Culture in Early Modern France (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975), p. 24.

[38] Davis, p. 24.

[39] Ibid., p. 27.

[40] Ibid., p. 48.

[41] Shelby T. McCloy, Government Assistance in Eighteenth Century France (Durham, N.C., Duke University Press, 1946), p. 212.

[42] McCloy, Chapters 1-9, provide an excellent description of socio-economic conditions - i.e. famine, flood, fire, sickness and epizootics, - in France during the eighteenth century. His interpretation is sympathetic to the efforts of the monarchy to deal with the social problems thereby generated. See McCloy's bibliography for other social histories of this era.

[43] Roland Mousnier, Paris au Temps de Richelieu et de Mazarin, (Paris: A. Pedone, n.d.), p. 288.

[44] McCloy, pp. 212-213.

[45] Mousnier, p. 288. Translation L. Savage.

[46] Flandrin, p. 130.

[47] Jacques Donzelot, The Policing of Families (New York: Pantheon, 1974), p. 48.

[48] Donzelot, p. 48; Flandrin, Families; also, "Repression and change in the Sexual Life of Young People in Medieval and Early Modern Times," in T. Hareven and R. Wheaton (eds.) Family and Sexuality in French History.

[49] For France, see works by Edward Shorter, Jean Meyer, Jean-Louis Flandrin, Jacques Donzelot and Peter Laslett, Bastardy, p. 2. For searching discussions of the problems surrounding the compilation and interpretation of illegitimacy statistics see Laslett's "Introduction: comparing illegitimacy over time and between cultures," Bastardy, pp. 1-69; also in the same volume see Alan Macfarlane, "Illegitimacy and Illegitimates in English History"; Karla Oosterveen, Richard M. Smith and Susan Stewart, "Family reconstitution and the study of bastardy: evidene from certain English parishes," pp. 86-140; Etienne van de Walle, "Illegitimacy in France during the nineteenth century," pp. 264-277; and John Knodel and Steven Hochstadt, "Urban and rural illegitimacy in Imperial Germany," pp. 284-312.

[50] Edward Shorter, The Making of the Modern Family (New York: Basic Books, 1975). This work has received more serious attention for its imaginative synthesis by European than by North American scholars, as its evidence is drawn mainly from the metropolitan (i.e. European) model. See pp. 80-85.

[51] Flandrin, "Repression," pp. 38-39.

[52] Lallemand, p. 150. Between 1701 and 1800, 388,817 children were abandoned to the hospitals of Paris (pp. 161, 741). See also McCloy, p. 238, fn. 6 and 7; and Bergues, p. 169. Bergues makes intentionality the crux of the difference between exposure and abandonment. She also states that contrary to common belief, the use of "tours," or revolving gateways, for the abandonment of infants, was unknown in France before 1789, and was not a feature of Paris institutions before the nineteenth century. For this reason the phenomenon has been omitted from the present discussion.

Bergues quotes from Camille Bloch, who found three causes for the "plague of abandonments" in the eighteenth century: poverty, the economic situation of unwed mothers in France, - they were mainly working women and servants - and the ease with which infants could be abandoned. Bloch, L'Assistance et l'état en France à la veille de la révolution (Paris: Alphonse Picard, 1908), pp. 103-104. See also the Annales de Démographie Historique: T. Adams, "Moeurs et hygiène publique au XVIII^e siècle," (1975, pp. 93-103); A. Chamoux, "L'Enfance Abandonnée à Reims à la fin du XVIII^e siècle," (1973, pp. 263-285); C. Delasselle, "Abandoned Children in Eighteenth Century Paris," (1975, pp. 47-82); and also: Century Nantes," in R. Forster and O. Ranum, Family and Society: Selections from the Annales, E.S.C. (Baltimore: 1976).

[53] McCloy, pp. 212-213.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Mousnier, p. 287.

[56] Ibid.

[57] McCloy, p. 181. These as well received some state funding.

[58] Ibid., pp. 211-212. The committee of mendicity of the National Assembly, however, reported (1791), according to McCloy, almost two million destitute children under the age of fourteen.

[59] De Genouillac, Vol. II, p. 418: "En 1684, on construisit à la Salpêtrière un quartier spécial pour y séquestrer les femmes d'une débauche et d'une prostitution publique et scandaleuse, afin que par leur contact elles ne corrompissent pas les autres pensionnaires de l'établissement." This was a "maison de force" in which the work was hard, the régime severe, the food bread, soup and water. T. Adams ("Moeurs et hygiène publique au XVIIIe siècle: quelques aspects des dépôts de mendicité," Annales de Démographie historiques, 1975, pp. 93-105) discusses the medical and architectural reforms as well as the moral ones, that resulted in the separation of different classes of inmates in poor houses and alms hospitals in the eighteenth century.

[60] McCloy, p. 211, quoted from Jacques Tenon, Mémoires sur les hôpitaux de Paris (Paris, 1788), p. 472.

[61] Lallemand, Ch. II, "Histoire de la Maison de la Couche à Paris." This institutionalization of childbirth for unwed mothers should be distinguished from the general hospitalization of childbirth as in the 18th century Lying Hospitals of England, for instance, from which unmarried women were carefully excluded as being dangerous to the virtue of their married sisters.

[62] Ruth K. McClure, Coram's Children The London Foundling Hospital in the Eighteenth Century (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981), p.5; Bergues, p. 173; Mary Purcell, The World of Monsieur Vincent (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963), p. 154. This favorite passage from the writings of Saint Vincent de Paul is taken from Correspondence, Entretiens, Documents, 15 vols., p. Coste (ed.) C.M. (Paris, 1920-1960), 13:798-799:

"The poor little creatures are badly looked after.... They are sold to beggars for eight sols apiece, beggars who break their arms and legs to excite the pity of passers-by and induce them to give alms. They are left to die of hunger. Very few adopt them, hardly three or four childless couples offered to do so over the last two years. At La Couche they are given laudanum pills to make them sleep and even worse than that happens. Not one of those received in the last fifty years is now alive. Greatest evil of all, many of them die without Baptism."

[63] Purcell, p. 154.

[64] Lallemand, pp. 121, 139-140.

[65] The emphasis on learning, on education, as a sixteenth century phenomena, is documented in considerable detail by Ariès in Centuries of Childhood. Of particular interest are the educational writings of Port-Royal (pp. 27, 110 and 126), (as the Jansenist strain would be picked up in the Règle primitive of the Misericorde, whose first chaplain, M. Roy, was a French priest who had been influenced by Jansenism), and the evidence pertaining to sixteenth century age

segregation (p. 27), to separation of classes in schools (p. 186) and to an emphasis on moral education in seminaries and academies (p. 206). Humanists such as Erasmus, Sir Thomas Elyot, Roger Ascham, Sir Thomas More, Jean Baptiste de la Salle, Coustel, Goussault, della Casa, Vives, Bordelon and others as well as Luther and Calvin, are cited as influential thinkers. (pp. 109-127).

CHAPTER III

The Sisters of Misericordia in Quebec 1848 - 1898

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the evolution of the role of the Misericordia of Montreal in nineteenth century Quebec.[1]

The previous chapter established that the origins of that role are in the Christian concern for the salvation of infant souls. The risk of the destruction of life, unborn or newly born, has been seen to be more acute in cases where the child has been conceived out of wedlock. The Penitential theologians, in maintaining that redemption and rehabilitation follow repentance, were shown to provide a key to understanding the conceptual origins of the reformist activity of the Sisters of Misercordia in their work with unwed mothers. The history of social assistance in France indicates that from the seventeenth century unwed mothers were seen as a separate category of the dependent poor, and were classified as to the likelihood of their redemption. The Sisters of Misercordia in Montreal were heir to these traditions, just as they were to French practices in law and religion, and family structure.

The Misericordia aimed at the rescue of unwed mothers through Christian charity and extended the notion of rescue into a more directed form of relief incorporating rehabilitation as a goal. The Sisters endeavoured to protect and re-educate unwed mothers so that they could return redeemed to a society which rejected unmarried maternity and illegitimate birth. In order to understand the evolution of this work it is necessary to review the social, religious and legal conditions in Quebec during the nineteenth century. This chapter will also discuss the survival of the ancien régime of France in the legal code of New France and Lower Canada as a way of describing the perpetuation of the

partriarchal family system. It will describe the ultramontane French Canadian Church as adhering to pre-Tridentine ideals and practices. It will also depict a few aspects of social life in nineteenth century Montreal, relating to the abandonment of children, the lives of working class women, and feminine education. The primary focus of the chapter, however, will be to document the specific strategies taken by the Misericorde in attempts to re-educate "fallen women" to a return to virtue.

The chapter will argue that the prevalence of infanticide and child abandonment in Montreal resulted from discrepancies between a code of sexual morality derivative of laws and religious ideals inherited from the ancien régime and the socio-economic realities of urban industrial life. These combined to make the position of single women particularly vulnerable, and the work of the Misericordia an urgent one in nineteenth century Montreal. The educative process of the Misericordia can be characterized as fostering a symbolic return to childhood during which the subject was encouraged to re-learn a "proper" submission to the prevailing legal and moral code.

New France: The Survival of the Ecclesiastical and Legal Domains of The Ancien Regime

Civil law in mid-nineteenth century Quebec was constituted by a combination of four elements. The first was the Coutume de Paris as it had survived from the ancien régime of France and the colonial French regime in Canada. Secondly, there were the numerous colonial and ecclesiastical ordinances promulgated prior to 1760 by French authorities. Thirdly, there was the legislation passed by the British that modified or changed the first two. Finally, the jurisprudence of

the French courts was interpreted by late eighteenth and nineteenth century French Canadian magistrates who looked to France even after the Conquest for guidance in the execution of French statutes still operative in Canada.[2]

Traditionally, French law in late medieval and early modern times was regional rather than national, and customary as opposed to legislated.[3] Laws were collected and written as "Coutumes" in different provinces of France, so that each area - originally each dukedom - had its own legal apparatus. This made for a complex system of laws that was eventually codified in the Napoleonic Code between 1800 and 1808. The administrators of New France chose the Coutume de Paris as the legal framework for the colony; thus early canadien law had its antecedents in medieval and Renaissance Paris.[4] The Coutume de Paris in New France, however, could be and was superceded by ordinances passed by all levels of authority from king to parish priest. Family law was particularly susceptible to change in this way. Under British governance after 1760, the French colonists retained the right of their old civil law whenever it was not contradicted by British legislation.[5]

The difficulties arising from this somewhat piecemeal arrangement resulted in the codification of Quebec law in the 1860s. The Quebec Code, although in form resembling the Napoleonic Code of France, in content retains the spirit and frequently the letter of the laws of the ancien régime.[6]

Because of this resemblance, nineteenth century French Canadian magistrates, both before and after the codification of Quebec law, when they needed guidance in the interpretation of the parts of the law surviving from the ancien regime, turned to the records of the courts of France.[7] Not only in the cultural and linguistic sense did the ties

between the mother country and the ex-colony remain strong, but in the execution of the legal structure there were unsevered links. The Civil Code of Quebec was not legislated until 1866, but the degree to which it represents "la survivance" of the ancien régime as regards the family renders it appropriate to this study of Montreal.

Altschul and Carron have summarized the Quebec Code as it pertains to marital law; the patria potestas is clearly embodied in its articles:

> A married woman is legally incapable of contracting or of appearing before the courts (art. 968); she may not engage in a calling distinct from that of her husband, nor engage in commerce without his consent (art.181); in community of property only the husband can administer and dispose of the joint property (art. 1292); while in separation of property the wife can administer, but not dispose of, her own property (arts. 1422 and 1424); mothers have the right to supervise and correct children only if the father defaults (art. 245); they cannot act as tutors of minor children alone (art. 282). This resembles position of married women a century earlier, summed up by Blackstone as follows: 'By marriage, the husband and wife are one person in law: that is, the very being or legal existence of the woman is suspended during the marriage.'[8]

As in ancient law, the legitimacy of children, upon which rests their place as heirs to either or both parental estates depends on the marriage of the parents, contracted either 180 days or less prior to, or at any time subsequent to, the birth of a child.

The degree to which "l'incapacité de la femme" and "la puissance maritale" of the husband were intended to protect the rights of the family, as defined by male lineage in the devolution of wealth and property, is clear when considering the articles of the Code Civile regarding le douaire, or dower rights. The Code "conserves the ancient rule of customary law regarding le douaire as it was manifest in the Coutume de Paris,"[9] thus finding its precedent in the laws of feudal France.

The Code extended the paternal authority over the family to children

as well as wives. Only in the event of the father's death was the mother granted any legal authority over her offspring.[10] Tutorship of parentless children was granted through the provision of a tutor; only if no male was available for that role was a female tutor permitted, and this under the guidance of a family council composed of seven male relatives.

In the code, the situation of children when born out of wedlock, reflected the absence of the legitimating paternal authority. Unless the mother acknowledged her child, it had no connection even with her in law. None either was there with the father, unless the appointed tutor instigated on her behalf a paternity suit, which if successful could secure for the child payment of essentials, but did not entail inheritance rights. Only by subsequent marriage of the parents could the birth be legitimized, and inheritance rights be validated. It was not until well into the twentieth century that provisions were made in Quebec legislation for the maintenance of neglected or destitute children.[11] As foundlings had no status in law, their legal position devolved onto the person or institution that undertook their care. In practice the situation had not changed from the ancien régime in New France.

The laws of Quebec in the middle of the nineteenth century upheld the patria potestas that had been revived by the French monarchy at the time of the seventeenth century classical renaissance. The tradition of stigma that applied in France to unwed mothers and their illegitimate children was perpetuated by law in Quebec. It was a tradition that was further reinforced by the Quebec Catholic Church as it attempted to order the family life of its faithful.

Rejecting the modernisms of the Gallican Catholic Church in

France, Quebecois ecclesiasts remained by tradition and choice conservative ultramontanistes. In 1659 the Vicariate Apostolic in Quebec was made a diocese with Laval as Bishop,[12] replacing the authority of the French Church with that of the Vatican, and making possible the repudiation of the post-Tridentine liberality that characterized the French Church. The British conquest in 1760 confirmed the break with French elements of ecclesiastical reform that were asserted during and after the Revolution. Quebec historians have argued that the clergy in British-occupied New France grew even more conservative - and elitist - under the new regime. Moreover, throughout the colonial and British administrations the Church, characterized by modern historians as "rigourist" if not Jansenist,[13] was deeply implicated in the attempts of the authorities to regulate social life.

Recent historical interpretations, however, stress a general lack of fit between ecclesiastical dictates and the actions of the populace. One account characterizes late seventeenth century Quebec as a town where "disorder and vice were rampant," quoting a cleric who thought the city "an open bordello."[14] Certainly the power of the Church over daily life can be questioned. In the matter of the marriage ceremony this has been demonstrated to have been particularly clear.

Marriage was an important issue in the life of the colony, both for the growth of the population and the stability and security of the social order, as well as a protection against immoral practices. Women were urged to marry early, were permitted to do so at age twelve, and were offered substantial family allowances as an incentive to exceptional fertility.[15]

The populace, however, appears to have been reluctant to obey the injunctures of the clergy. The average age of marriage during the

ancien régime, for instance, was twenty-six for men and twenty-two for women.[16] Aside from the question of when a marriage should take place, there was the question of what form it should take. Mariage à la gaumine was a deliberate circumvention of church dictates. One variation of this took place when couples would go to the church together with their witnesses, participate in the mass and then when the priest turned to bless the congregation, rise and shout out their nuptial vows.[17] Baptism was similarly often undertaken by a "sprinkling" at home in defiance of church rule.[18] The reluctance of the people to conform to marital and baptismal rituals, seen by the church to be crucial to the practice of religion, is a clear indication of the lack of serious regard for official dictates.[19]

In both legal and ecclesiastical affairs, then, officialdom attempted to duplicate the regulations of the old order, but without complete success. Whether the inability of the authorities in the new land to control the lives of the people was any more or less severe than in France is open to speculation. It can be surmised, however, given the conservative tradition in church affairs that took shape in New France, that the division between official teachings and popular activity may have been more acute, and the severity of the authorities more intense, as the latter attempted to regulate social life with an assiduity born not only by their apocalyptic views but also by the very distance between the teachers and the taught.

Religious Charity Institutionalized in Quebec, 1690-1800

Indicative of the tension between official views and popular life is the discrepancy between reported illegitimacy rates, which were low, and

evidence suggesting that from as early as 1694, abandoned children or foundlings were a constant and visible problem to the colonial administration. Inasmuch as some historians have thought illegitimacy to have been virtually non-existant in colonial New France,[20] the view has been that girls married so young as to preclude pre-marital pregnancy, and the pastoral order was strong enough to make adulterous unions quite exceptional. The illegitimacy rates of .2 per cent for 1700 and 1.2 per cent for 1760,[21] however, have more recently been seen, quite accurately, to reflect only the baptised illegitimate, who may well have been the minority of bastards.[22] The unreliability of baptismal records is reinforced not only by numerous although unsubstantiated tales of unwanted infants given to Amerindians, but also by an abundance of documented reports attesting to the not insignificant number of foundlings whose support devolved upon state and church coffers.

The care of foundlings, and of other persons without means of support, from the beginning of the colonial regime devolved upon the Church with some assistance from the state. Historians have noted that from 1639, when the order of the Hospitalières founded the Hotel Dieu in Quebec, social welfare in French Canada was the province of women's religious orders. The Hôtel Dieu (Quebec) and then the Hôpital Général (Ville Marie), saw to the needs of the aged, the orphaned, the sick and the poor. In 1688 Bishop Saint-Vallier founded the Bureau des Pauvres in Quebec, which like the Hôpital Général de Paris acted as a relief centre and employment agency for the poor.[23]

In these institutions, which combined the functions of almshouses, hospitals and prisons, it appears that women were installed in separate quarters from the men, particularly when the charge against them was

bawdiness, or when they were with child. In 1694 the Séminaire de Montréal established a refuge for bawdy women called the Jéricho, an institution which incarcerated women for a short period of time and took in homeless mothers.[24] At this early stage the attitude of the Church seems to have been that the line was thin indeed between unwed motherhood and a form of immorality allied to, if not synonymous with, prostitution.[25]

In order to discourage immoral behaviour, various punishments for "unruly women" were proposed. In 1687 Louis XIV wrote to Denonville and Champigny, who wanted to banish them from the colony, rejecting their solution and proposing instead to punish such women by the public humiliation of drawing water and sawing wood in the town squares. Incarceration in the Jéricho, restraint meant as punishment, was seen as the solution. It was not a success. Its brief existence however indicates special treatment for unruly women, some of whom may be presumed to be mothers.[26] Very clearly, the institutionalization of such women, patterned along the lines of the General Hospital of Paris, was attempted in Quebec at this time.

Initially, this institutional pattern was not copied with respect to the strategies implemented to deal with abandoned children. By 1694 the Church shared with the state the responsibility for foundlings, but through a system of fostering, not institutionalized care. When at this time the state authorities began to pay midwives to find nurses for foundlings, the parish priest had to attest to the good character of the midwife in order that she receive her salary. Children placed in parish homes also remained his the moral responsibility, as through the ministration of the sacraments he was able to maintain some control - assuming the regularity of church attendance - over the fate of the

child.[27]

Documents exist attesting to a procedure of adoption by foster families. The motive for adopting a foundling is made clear in the contract signed by the parents and the Crown Attorney. In exchange for this care, the child was bound over to "work with all his force for the profit of the family."[28] Fostering was no different from the system of indenture that poor or widowed parents turned to, and for which notarial records are reported to survive from as early as 1688. These records indicate dthat children could be indentured as apprentices as early as two years of age, although six or seven was more common.[29] Illegitimate children were treated in a similar manner to orphans and sold into service, their material conditions, affective relations and education devolving upon the foster parent or master. The difference is that in fosterage the parent received both a sum from the Crown and the labour of the child; an indenture, to the contrary, meant that the master paid the real parents for the child's labour, and eventually had to provide certain goods to the child, usually clothing. Fostered children were known as "les enfants du roi" because the Crown assumed financial responsibility for them, a practice which appears to have endured until the end of the French regime.[30] Efforts were made to locate the fathers of illegitimate children in order to exact expenses for their keep.[31] As soon as a child was weaned from a paid wet-nurse, he was, if possible, bound over to a foster family. Foster parents expected and received cash in exchange for their promise to rear a child carefully,

> to feed him, and keep him in sickness as well as in health, to raise him and instruct him in the Roman Catholic Apostolic religion, kindly as they would their own, doing their best for him until he reaches the age of twenty years.[32]

In neither case does there appear to have been any surveillance to

protect the child. Nor was there any protection offered the child when in 1706 the Council of the Marine passed an edict permitting royal officers to care for foundlings and later to indenture them as apprentices or to settlers as farm labourers.[33] Relief from penury, rather than child rescue, was the dominant motif.

As previously mentioned, the population of Quebec in the seventeenth century is said to have become increasingly "characterized by bravado, insouciance and a considerable disdain for authority."[34]

By 1737 the monies paid out to nurses for the care of foundlings had mounted to five thousand pounds,[35] to the surprise and dismay of the administrators. Unwilling to endure this increased expense, the Crown cut back on monthly stipends to nurses and urged foster parents to indenture children at four years of age. It is unlikely that the founding, in the following year, of the Order of the Grey Nuns and their orphanage is entirely coincidental. If in France it appears that the state became involved in social welfare because Church provisions were inadequate to the needs of an ever more populous mendicant class, it seems clear that in eighteenth century Quebec the opposite occurred: when state provisions diminished, a female religious order took up the care of foundlings, following a pattern that had already been established for other categories of the dependent poor in late seventeenth century Quebec.

Mme. d'Youville, the foundress of the order of the Sisters of Charity (Grey Nuns), was originally inspired by the sight of the frozen hand of a newborn child stretching skywards through the ice over the stream where the infant, a dagger still in its throat, had been jettisoned.[36] Apocryphal or otherwise, this story occasioned the naming of Foundling Street in Montreal.[37] Even allowing for a degree of poetic

licence, it seems that it was far from uncommon, in Ville Marie on the eve of the British conquest, and certainly after it, to tip on the limbs of the victims of infanticide while walking in the streets of the town.[38]

In 1738 Mme. d'Youville established "une refuge et retraite . . . pour les filles tombées" in order to conserve "good morals and the honour of families."[39] In the writings of Mère d'Youville, as she became known, the aims of the rescue of foundlings and of unwed mothers seen to be one and the same, a doubling of goals that set a precedent for Quebec institutions from then on. The institutional care of foundlings and orphans became a regular feature of Quebec social life, as did the separation of unwed mothers from both the population at large and from other categories of female offenders.

Extensive as the efforts of the Grey Nuns were, they could not quickly change the customs and attitudes of many years. Infanticide did, however, come to be regarded with more horror by the public. By 1815 it was considered a crime on the same level, or nearly so, with homicide, as can be seen from this item from the Montreal Herald, February 18, 1815:

> Quebec. A most atrocious deed has been lately perpetrated in the vicinity of this city. A Servant Girl who had managed to conceal her pregnancy feigned to be indisposed, and being in a chamber by herself, was delivered of a child which was afterwards found in the stove by another servant, partly consumed. A Coroner's inquest was held on the remains of the infant, and we are informed gave a verdict of murder against the mother. She however, has not yet been arrested, having left the house where she was, shortly after the discovery of the crime.[40]

Changing morality and shifting sentiments towards child life in nineteenth century French Canada have thus far been little explored by anglophone historians, some of whom have on the whole tended to endow

Quebec with social stacity that prevented internal change as well as removing Quebec from outside North American influence.[41] Yet in Montreal as well as Toronto and New York, the mid-nineteenth century was a time of energetic philanthropic activity.[42] Included in this were intensified efforts to save unwed mothers and their illegitimate children.

In 1829, the doors of the Refuge for Repentant Females were opened by Mme. Hughette Latour McDonel, the widow of a wealthy riverboat captain, she was evidently inspired by her friendship with some neighbors, the Sisters of Providence. The refuge operated with the financial assistance of the municipal authorities as well as the moral support of the Bishop, Monseigneur J.J. Lartigue. It received over three hundred girls in the years 1829 to 1836, when Mme. McDonel remarried and closed the hospice.[43] Her work was continued by four sisters from France of the Communauté du Bon Pasteur, in 1844, and then by Mme. Rosalie Cadron Jetté in the Hospice Sainte-Pélagie, which evolved into the Misericordia Maternity Hospital.

During the early nineteenth century the efforts of religious orders as well as those of private philanthropists in French Canada shifted their emphasis from the "fille tombée" of earlier times to the "fille repentie". When the Refuge for Repentant Females was opened, this shift from restraint to a more directed and purposeful form of institutional care had been firmly established.

It is worth noting that although the religious communities that established and operated the institutions for the care of poor women and children received some financial aid from the state, the initiative and direction for such endeavours came from the Church.

The hospices were intended to save the souls of children who

otherwise might well be abandoned and therefore never baptised. The care of children in the orphan asylums to which foundlings were inevitably relegated was similar to that in France: baptism, then farming out to a wet nurse who received a salary for her aid. In 1866, for example, the Grey Nuns received 624 children and spent $3805 on salaries for wet-nurses; in 1867, for 652 children the sum was $3800, and the next year for 614 children, $4312;[44] the approximate annual salary for a nurse (assuming the age of weaning to be twelve months) was between six and seven dollars - or sixty or seventy cents per month, the price of about twenty street car tickets.[45] It is hardly surprising that there was difficulty in finding suitable nurses. Few babies survived the rigours of abandonment, wet-nursing and institutional care. The records of the Grey Nuns show a infant death toll of eighty-nine per cent in 1867.[46] This must be measured against an overall high rate of infant mortality.[47] It is clear however that the foundling asylums were an inadequate solution to the problem of child abandonments. It was perceived that the way around the high mortality rates of infant asylums was to rescue not only unwed mothers so as to baptise their babies, but also to re-educate them and thus hope to reduce the incidence of unwed pregnancy.

Thus, the religious purpose of spiritual salvation became closely connected to the provision of social assistance in Quebec, at least in the case of foundlings and unwed mothers, from the first half of the eighteenth century. As well as inheriting from the old order in France a patriachal family structure, in Quebec society was also furthered the tradition of religious charity that had evolved from centuries of European ecclesiastical expression. To restore to the paths of virtue women who had erred or fallen was one focus of the philanthropists of

nineteenth century Montreal. No attempt was made to admonish or castigate their male partners. The public order would be served by the rehabilitation to good behaviour of women who were, if not actively contributing to the proliferation of vice, in danger of doing so. For all that, it was recognized that social conditions made the position of the unwed mother a particularly desperate one.

Nineteenth Century Montreal and the Educative Role of the Misericordia

Historians have done much to document socio-economic conditions in nineteenth century Montreal.

During the 1850s the population of Montreal climbed from 57,000 to over 92,000.[48] Urban migrations in the 1830s and massive Irish immigration in the 1840s led an influx of the dispossessed, destitute and desperate to seek their livelihood in the city. Overcrowded tenement suburbs resulted. During the 1850s Montrealers rioting caused fires that left tens of thousands homeless, by national tension, rioting and cholera epidemics.[49] By the late 1850's, however, the factories along the Lachine Canal, the building of the Victoria Bridge and the Montreal waterworks meant the "opening of new frontiers of opportunity" and also "brought new relationships to the social classes of Montreal." By the end of the century the economic structure was dependent to a large extent on the cheap labour of working women.[50]

Domestic service and factory work were the main occupations for women. One quarter of all the city's working people in 1825 were female domestic servants. By 1881 almost 16 per cent of Montreal's female population worked in manufacturing industries. Apart from low status, abysmal working conditions, sexual harassment and for domestic servants

loneliness, the most significant feature of women's work in nineteenth century Montreal was, as in other industrializing cities at that time, low pay.[51] In factories one-half to one-third of the man's wage for comparable work was the normal female's salary. More than one salary was often required by a working class family in order to make ends meet, and women's wages were scaled to assist, rather than to support, a family.[52] For the working-class women in the districts that surrounded the factories of Montreal, low wages went hand-in-hand with an unstable labour market, inadequate and crowded housing, poor nutrition, illness, high mortality rates and a "fragmented" family life.[53]

For those in domestic service, isolation and alienation from the cushioning of a family network were frequent companions. The dangers of loneliness, and unscrupulous male attention, were well-recognized, as attested to by the following exerpt from the Montreal Herald, signed by one "Leonora", relating the dangers of life and single women:

COMMUNICATION

I was taking a stroll by meself at night,
When I met with a youth who was once my delight,
With a maid he was talking, and as I drew near,
I heard him address her, with my "love" & "my dear"!
And many more words, which your senses would fright;
I well know their meaning, but they're not fit to write.
By his vows and his sighs, it was plain to my view,
That his only design was this maid to undo;
To plunge her in sorrow I am sure was his aim,
Then leave her to perish when depriv'd of her fame.
So I thought it my duty to explain her the case,
That his vows were untrue, that his purpose was base,
And declared my intent for a great public good,
To expose all such arts, as each young lady should;
For still I am resolved to print deeds that are wrong,
Tho' dear Carlos a parody writes to my song.[54]

What was the fate of women whose seduction ended in pregnancy? For some, if not all, domestic service was out of the question. Advertisements such as "Wanted, a Female Servant of good character, who

understands Cooking and the Drudgery of the House. A woman having a child will not answer"[55] make clear the vanity of hopes for such a situation. It can be presumed that such stipulations encouraged women badly in need of "a place" to abandon their infants. The exact extent of illegitimacy will likely never be known, for it is impossible to determine the approximate percentage of all illegitimate births represented by those of the Misericordia?[56] The confidentiality of the records has been carefully guarded by the Misericordia, precisely because of the "dishonour" under investigation. The number of abandoned children rescued tells little about the total, many of whom may have died. Not even quantitative research will tell the whole story, for names have been changed, identities concealed, so that family reconstruction is impossible.

The records of the Misericordia in Montreal are helpful however in compiling an initial profile of unwed motherhood: Table I gives

TABLE I

Age and Occupation of Montreal Penitents

At The Misericordia By Percentage

1885-1905[57]

1885-1905		1900	
Age of Penitents	% of all Penitents	Pre-pregnancy Employment	% of all Penitents
Under 20	31	Domestic Servants	50
20-25	40	Not Working	31
25-30	17	Factory or other work	13
31 +	12	Other	6

Considerable caution must be exercised in drawing conclusions from these

figures about the incidence of unwed motherhood in Montreal. Does the low figure of thirteen per cent for unwed mothers who were factory workers indicate that fewer factory wage-employees than domestic servants engaged in illicit sex, that more undertook to abort their unborn, or that they had greater access to contraception than the average Quebec woman?[58] Does it mean that this group was less prone to submit to the institutionalized regime of the Sisters, whereas women employed as domestic servants would have been more dependent on a given domestic structure and more likely to adapt easily to the convent setting, or that their working conditions were less likely than a household to permit illicit sexual activity? What about the thirty-one per cent who were not working? Were they unemployable, unemployed, deserted wives, widows degenerates or middle class girls not exposed to the moral menace of men in factories or shops? Details of case histories of the Misericordia wards are unavailable, so that answers to these questions remain elusive. One certainty, however, is that in the Quebec population that was 89.4 per cent Francophone and Roman Catholic (1852),[59] the use of birth control was limited, and child abandonment, with the hope of rescue by a third party, was construed by the faithful as less sinful than either abortion or contraception, which destroyed human life. If the re-education of fallen women was the goal of the Miséricorde, what were women to be re-educated to? As far as written sources go, and bearing in mind the class bias of published writings at this time, the reigning ideology concerning the role of women, despite the importance of women in the urban work force, held that the most desirable position for women was that of wife and mother. The French-Canadian woman was to be, above all else, "une bonne mère."[60] The first requisite of a "good mother" in a society where the titular

head of the family is male is to provide oneself with a husband. Failure to do so was associated with a life of debauchery even when it was recognized that the girl involved had erred only once, or strayed "by accident" from the accepted route to motherhood.

What happened however to those who did stray? The re-education of women by the Misericordia is the subject of the second part of this section. It will be clear after an exploration of the Misericordia rules and expectations governing the maternity convent that the Order endorsed rehabilitation as well as rescue.

The foundress of the Order of the Sisters of Misericordia, Marie Rosalie Cadron, was born in 1794, to a family of well-to-do farmers of the village of Lavaltrie, near Montreal. When she was seventeen, she married Jean-Marie Jetté. The young couple continued to live with her parents. M. Cadron died in 1812, leaving the young couple and the girl's mother to manage the farm. Eleven children were born, of whom six survived infancy. Thus experienced in the rituals of life and death, Mme. Jetté was often called upon to lay out the dead and assist with the newborn. Very devout, she taught the catechism to young children and prepared them for first communion. She represents, in fact, an energetic and resourceful model of the French-Canadian feminine ideal of virtue, piety, charity and above all maternity.[61]

In 1825 the family moved to Montreal, forced by depressed agricultural prices of the 1820's to abandon their farm. In 1832 M. Jetté died of cholera. Four years later the elderly and ailing Mme. Cadron died. Mme. Jetté was sustained by her faith and the need to continue to provide for her children. She drew consolation from her confessor, Ignace Bourget, who was soon to become Bishop of Montreal. She was also eminently practical, and supported her family by

midwifery.

The widow lived next door to Notre-Dame Church. As a midwife from the days of village life she was often called upon to find a secret place for the accouchement of homeless and pregnant young women. The journals of Mother Jetté are among the sacred relics of the Sisters of Misericordia. Father Fournet, the writer who composed the fiftieth anniversary book of homage to the Misericordia, wrote about her first instance of assistance to an unmarried mother. It is an account that is of interest as much for the role it played in shaping the self-perceptions of Sisters at the turn of the century as for its content:

> One day, while taking a walk with two of her neighbors, she met two unfortunates who had just been fighting with a young man. The hands of the unhappy creatures were torn and cut, and dripping with blood, and one of them was uttering terrible oaths. Madame Jetté's companions turned away with horror from the wretched women, but she herself, doubtless inspired from above, turned towards them, saying in her heart: 'Who knows, if a single kindly word may not bring them back to God'? She then affably approached them, and in a gentle and compassionate voice asked them if they found happiness in leading such a life? On hearing these charitable words the unfortunates were touched, and the youngest at once made answer: 'I am very unhappy, I had not lived in this way for two weeks when I would have wished to give it up. But who would be willing to receive us now? Alas we can hope for nothing but scorn and contempt.' Madame Jetté replied: 'If you sincerely wish to give up your evil ways, I will show you the means of doing so.' She then advised them to go to Notre-Dame Church, to the confessional of a holy priest, who had already, she knew, helped persons desirous of abandoning a disorderly life.[62]

Eventually Mother Jetté was taking such women into her own house. Perhaps alarmed for the safety and moral health of her own children, she and Bishop Bourget had, by 1845, devised a plan that led to the establishment of the Hospice Sainte-Pélagie and eventually to the Misericordia.

On May 1, 1845, Mme. Jetté moved into a rented house on Saint Simon

Street in the St. Laurent suburb of Montreal. She was accompanied by a woman with (a newborn) infant.[63] The Hospice Sainte-Pélagie,[64] as the Bishop named the refuge, from June onwards of that year housed from eight to ten pregnant girls. Mother Jetté was joined by Sophie Desmarais Raymond, another widow, in July 1845. In May of the next spring the women moved back downtown to Wolfe Street, to a house equipped with a tiny chapel. To help with the work, Elizabeth Tailleur and Lucie Benoît, as well as Geneviève Saloi, a midwife, moved in. In March of that year Bishop Bourget had instituted a directive regarding the rules that the "pentitentes" should observe during their stay, and in July produced a similar rule for the Superiors, declaring that they could if they wished make the observance of the rule a probation for religious life, in the Congregation des Dames de Sainte-Pélagie. By 1847 the evolution towards a religious life for the Sisters was complete, and the Order was constituted as the Soeurs de Miséricorde on January 16, 1848.

La Règle, (the rule) of the Order was written by Antoine Rey, the Chaplain. It pertained on the one hand to the conduct of the women professing their vows, on the other to the behaviour expected of the "pentitentes." The former stipulated a communal life where all property and resources were shared equally; where the superior was elected, and where the process of decision-making was democratic.

Poverty and obedience were the rule and chastity not only the rule but a prime source of inspiration to the girls and women who resided in the hospice.[65] It was a communal organization in which there existed, however, an elected hierarchical order empowered to mete out discipline.

With regard to the behaviour of the Sisters in their dealing with the girls and women who were their wards, the Third rule of the First

Chapter stipulates that

> Spiritual grace will be exercised in the effort to gain for God and to attach irrevocably to Him all those who come to put themselves in the hands of the sisters, by all sorts of good examples, gentle and soothing manners, charitable attentions, especially with regard to that which is demanded by their physical condition, and by all sorts of instructions and advice . . . ; by assiduous vigilance as much meant to retrain them in their duty as to draw out of these observations the means of assessing what is good for each one individually, whether by conveying this to the director or by another means.[67]

The first aim of the Misericordia was to instill a sense of religion; it was said of the Order that "solicitude for the salvation of souls prevails over and absorbs all other considerations.[67]

A second objective, closely interwoven with that of salvation, however, was that behavioural reform of the unwed mothers should accompany spiritual renewal, recognized in the rule by the admonition that the pentitents "are to bear in mind that they have entered this house in order to learn to know, to love and to serve God, and begin an entirely new life."[68]

Bishop Bourget instructed the Sisters to make their charges understand that "their honour as well as their happiness . . . depend on their not being obliged to return to the maternity," reflecting a secular concern with the prevention of repeated illegitimate pregnancies,[69] just as the admonitions for spiritual and physical mercy reflect concern for the relief of suffering.

The rule was quite explicit about the achievement of this goal. The Fourth Rule of Chapter One, for instance, counsels the Sisters that in their dealing with the penitents they "must avoid carefully speaking - formally or implicitly - about the sin that is the cause of . . . dishonour; for the shame that that would entail would be capable of preventing all the good that one hopes to do by other means."[70]

Instructions such as these, embodied in the Règlements pour les personnes qui se sont offertes à Dieu pour conduire l'oeuvre de l'hospice de Ste. Pélagie érigé à Montréal, leave no doubt that the intention of the order was reformatory as well as redemptive. In other words, that the Sisters hoped to secure not only the expiation of the sin of the penitent, but also hoped to effect a more practical return to the conventional ways of the world. Furthermore, the Rule outlined a regime that required strict observance of a prescribed spiritual discipline.

The Misericordia grew quickly. It overflowed one house after another in search of larger quarters, until finally a piece of land with two buildings was acquired in 1851 on Dorchester just west of Campeau Street. Construction began and in 1854 the Order moved into its Mother House which accomodated them for the next fifty years. In 1879 a hospice was established in Ottawa; in 1887 one in New York. In 1889 the infant room was expanded to the Misericordia Infant Asylum, for the Grey Nuns by that time found themselves so inundated with foundlings that they were no longer able to accept newborn babies from the Misericordia. In 1897 a mission was added in Winnipeg, in 1900, one in Edmonton. From 1877 to 1898 the number of women who found refuge annually with the order was between 350 and 450, and the total in the first fifty years was 14,354.[71] The provision of assistance to unwed mothers clearly fulfilled an urgent social need.

The Rule of the Order prevailed in all these centres. Without close analysis, the rules and discipline meted out seem repressive. The institutionalization of unwed mothers in the Misericordia convent setting shared superficially some characteristics of other correctional facilities seen by nineteenth century reformers as the answer to social

ills. Primary among these was the separation of the "client" from the outside world. Rothman characterizes this seige mentality as common to the asylum movement and as indicative of an attempt to help the subject resist the "assaults of temptations." Thus the emphasis on discipline, obedience and respect for authority, all of which were to be fostered in separateness, is grounded in views of human nature as changeable and the world as "dangerous and unruly."[72] What the Misericordia wished to achieve, via the separation of the unwed mother from the world of her past, and the imposition in a new setting of a strictly disciplined life, was a return to a childlike state whence values, attitudes, deportment and beliefs might be relearned or newly assimilated. A reconstruction of the daily routine of the inhabitants of the Maternity reveals that separation from the outside world, isolation from the past and from family and friends, acceptance of the defined order, compliance with the rites of religious life and dependence on the sisters, acted to protect the unwed mother from the hostility of a society that did not tolerate sexual nonconformity in women. In so doing it served to "save the honour of families" at the same time as to "diminish the dreadful crime of infanticide."[73]

The process of separation from the world for the pregnant woman began with a change in name: "The Penitents shall each adopt a pseudonym in place of her family name (in 1851 changed to the Saint's name) so as to safeguard their own honour as well as that of their relatives."[74] The names of the babies, once born, maintained this anonymity. The mother chose the first name of her child, but the Sisters generally gave all babies born in the same month the same name.[75] The name penitent denotes a state of mind that all entrants were encouraged to adopt, and which differentiated their life in the

hospice from that of the past. It was anticipated that as soon as possible after entering the house the penitents would make a three day retreat, during which isolation from even the other members of the community, meditation, reflection and prayer, were expected to help them "fathom the depth of abyss to which they were hurrying and, with the help of grace, conceive a salutary shame."[76] This would be followed by "tears of repentance and the accents of sincere conversion: "Surgam et ibo ad Patrem meum"."[77] The purpose of isolation was then to induce reflection, repentance and a determination of the will to change. This emphasis on individual repentance and volition to reform seem to attribute the cause of the woman's plight to the failure to lead a moral life, to weak will, to individual rather than environmental causes. That the Misericordia Sisters shared, however, the sentiments Rothman connects with the growth of asylums in the United States, is made perfectly clear in the early writings of the Sisters, which identify as the root of the problem "a corrupt world which after inflicting unhappiness by causing them [the penitents] to lose all honour, reproves their presence by seeing them as objects worthy only of hatred and disgust."[78] Thus although sin is an individual condition, the influence of a corrupt world that puts temptation in the way only to mock at those who give into it, is paramount.

Separation from society is at best an ambivalent (at worst a punitive) mode, and this ambivalence was no less a feature of the Miséricorde than of other asylums. During the early years of the Maternité, when it stood across Campeau Street from the main building which was between Dorchester and Lagauchetière Streets facing Campeau on the East, the pentitentes were required to cross to the main building where the chapel was located to attend Mass. Waiting to taunt them were

"rows of men with sardonic and impudent looks and uttering low and sarcastic taunts" who "would gather up close on either side of the hapless penitentes." The women wore coarse brown veils to hide their faces, and, on their shoulders, a red cape symbolizing the "scarlet" aspect of their womanhood. The brown and red costume was replaced within a few years by a black cap and veil a costume of greater simplicity that continued to preserve the anonymity of the wearer and also emphasized the difference between the life of the convent and the outside world. Not only were the penitents separated from their former milieu but within the community they were separated in many instances from the Sisters. Meals, for instance, were taken separately, and the penitents occupied dormitories apart from the Sisters. It should be noted, however, that this element of internal separation depended on the relative affluence of the community at different times during its development. During the earliest years, on Wolfe Street and before, Mère de la Nativité, as Mme. Jetté was called, shared, as did the sisters with her, their table as well as their sleeping room with the penitentes. In this respect the internal isolation of the women, as well as their external separation from society, grew as the organizational hierarchy of the community became more elaborate.

For the unwed mothers, entry into the convent also offered protection from public dishonour, from economic distress and from physical discomfort of solitary childbearing. The community offered first of all bed and board, at no cost to indigent women who were, however, expected to contribute whatever talents they possessed in order to sustain the life of the community. In the early years this included needlework, shoemaking, laundry (for the outside world as well as the community), soapmaking, cabinet and furniture making and, of course,

cleaning and cooking. It also offered medical assistance before, during and after childbirth. The Order acted as an informal employment agency, helping the women to find work, usually as servants in "respectable" homes, subsequent to their confinements. Most of all it offered an acceptable manner of disposing of the child whose support, for an unmarried woman, would have been extremely precarious. Emotional considerations regarding the acceptance or rejection of the infant are seldom mentioned in the official documents.

This protection went much further than physical help, however. It was intrusive in the most cloying sense, assuring constant vigilance over the penitents. Surveillance was intended to prevent any lapse in outward demeanour, such as use of bad language, blasphemy, lack of charity or failure to recite prayers. This vigilance, which the Misericordia Mother Marie des Sept Douleurs in her Mémoires (1846) termed une industrie innocente on the part of her fellow Sister N., the mistress of penitents, consisted of "going to surprise them at the times when the poor girls least expected her, walking very softly and listening to what they said in order to see if they did as she had told them."[79]

The idea of protection included, protection from self, from each other, outside hostility and from family dishonour. It was also protection to the infant against sin, as it ensured the baptism, if not necessarily the long life, of the child to be born, and protected the mother against the temptation to abandon and thus more or less consciously kill, her child.

As well as separation and protection, the process of resocialization of the unwed mother involved a strong element of reliance on the community. What socialization is about, among other things, is the

structuring of volition, the restraining of independent and individualistic impulses so that the will meshes with the demands of social organization. In some sense the call to a religious life, for the nineteenth century women who wished to sidestep marriage, offered possibilities for individual and community autonomy that made the opportunities of the secular world, by comparison, seem somewhat limited. And although the demands of religious life can be seen in the light of greater direction of individuality rather than its negation, it seems clear that for the protegees of the Misericordia, if not for the permanent members of the community, entry into the convent involved a submission to authority that, in the framework of the rehabilitation model, stresses dependence as a component in the education of women.

Other aspects of the internal organization of the Order played a part in the lives of the penitents as well. From the beginning it was the case that a few of the women who entered the refuge[80] expressed a wish to remain with the Sisters after the birth of their children. In 1859 the Bishop instituted the Order of the Magdalenes for such cases. As a Magdalene, each sister was exhorted to reproduce in herself the modified and penitential life of that holy friend of Jesus, Mary Magdalene and live, within the Miséricorde but as a separate group, according to a Rule as strict as that of the reclusive Carmelites. A Magdalene never left the convent again during her lifetime; her work involved domestic chores for the community. Much of the time was spent in silence. As well the Magdalenes, another class of penitents, "les Consacrées," or the Preservation group, was open to women who wished to postpone their return to the outside world, but did not feel ready to embrace the Magdalene vows. As well, the community included nurses and <u>filles de confiance</u>, women who lived in the convent giving of their

service, receiving room and board in exchange, but bound by no vows at all.

The lesson entailed in the difference between the Sisters and the Magdalenes, who were not permitted to join the regular Order, teaches several things: that the stigma of unwed motherhood first of all could never be dismissed. This underlines the requirement for ongoing repentance, for constant efforts to avoid "falling" again, and for regular confession and communion. The difference between the two orders was virginity. The Magdalenes could achieve a state of grace just as revered as that of the Sisters, but it seemed to take more dedication - more intensive separation, greater protection against idle talk, greater sacrifice in the choice of work, which was menial and domestic. Having fallen from grace, it was seen that it took concentrated effort to be reinstated. Thus the stigma of unmarried pregnancy was reinforced even at the same time as it was exonerated.

Into this structure the unwed mother came and occupied a place on the lowest rung. She was excluded from any of the decisions regarding community operations, that exercise being reserved, naturally enough, for the Sisters. Following the Rule meant, for the penitente, accepting dictates regarding who did what, and when. Prayers, meantimes, work - in the early days, the heavy work of running a self-sufficient organization that had no primary source of income - were conducted according to a prescribed schedule. Failure to accept the discipline meant expulsion from the community.

According to Schnell's "Childhood as ideology"[81] model, delayed responsibility is a fourth element of childhood; it can be added to separation, protection and dependence as components of the re-education process of the Misericordia. The clearest example is of course the fact

that the newborn infant was, until later in the development of the Order, almost automatically removed from the care of the mother and sent either to the Grey Nuns' orphanages or the Misericordia Infant Asylum. That the mothers would most likely have chosen to relinquish rights over the children had they been given the option, knowing the difficulty of supporting a child, does not diminish the lack of choice allowed. By isolating the unwed mother from her past life, by separating her from society, by offering her some protection physically and spiritually from the scorn of the outside world and from the debilitating effects of poverty and malnutrition during pregnancy, as well as by delaying the responsibility of acting as a parent, the regime of the Miséricorde attempted to re-educate the unwed mother into a role more appropriate to the prevailing code of morality and sexual behaviour. The aim was not to remove the stigma of unwed motherhood, but in the context of that code, to invoke repentance and reformation through the interweaving of good example, remorse, submission and faith. Spiritual redemption followed repentence, confession and communion. Temporal salvation however was a question of changed attitudes and behaviour.

It is tempting to attribute to the Misericordia an outright rejection of the paternal power, in the manner of the early Christians, for one of their primary concerns, the elimination of infanticide, was akin to the position of the first Christians. But to do so would be to distort the reality. The very essence of the Order is contained in the name Misericordia, or mercy, in the sense of forgiveness and grace. The state of unwed pregnancy requires forgiveness, as it is a transgression against the laws of the Church and of secular society. The object of the resocialization process was to instill in women, through faith, the virtues of chastity, forebearance, and piety that were associated with

the ideals of nineteenth century womanhood in French Canada.

The tenor of this process of re-education is consistent with the aims of formal education for nineteenth century women in Montreal. Transcending linguistic and ethnic barriers were the qualities considered desirable in the middle and upper class girls who attended the academies and convent schools of the city. For such, "regularity, neatness obedience, docility, industriousness and religion" were embedded in the daily routine of school or convent life."[82] Girls were reared to be "modest, reserved, in a word, all they should be," meaning that they should have the virtues of good mothers and wives in the conservative tradition of chastity, good manners and passivity.

If conditions in the late nineteenth century resembled those of the early twentieth, as they can be presumed to have done at least in the rural districts of Quebec it can be said as far as education about sexuality was concerned, a "wall of silence" prevailed. If children asked about babies, they were told either a fiction or to mind their tongues, but most youngsters learned early the rule that some topics are beyond discussion, and gleaned what information they could form their peers.[83]

Whereas the daughters of wealthy parents would attend school until the age of sixteen, or more, many working class children did not attend primary school long enough to learn basic literacy skills. Low wages of parents were the main reason for popular resistance to compulsory schooling. The salaries of children were needed to balance the family budget. In the cotton industry, for example, where wages were notoriously low, children comprised one fifth of the employed.[84] The most formal education that the majority of poor girls could expect would have been a few years in an asile, or day-care centre. Between 1864 and

1868 about 3400 children in Montreal were cared for this way - and a third that many, 1200 worked in cotton mills.[85] For most, perhaps, any formal schooling at all was unusual.

Part II of this chapter has documented the efforts of a handful of woman who attempted, at first informally and then under the gradually unfolding umbrella of the institution, they helped to structure, to assist unmarried pregnant women, to save their infants and to restore the women to virtue. The educative function of the unwed mother's sojourn with the sisters has been described in terms of a process of separation, isolation, dependence and protection. These features have been described elsewhere as the distinctive characteristics of an ideology of childhood that began to be recognized and accepted in nineteenth century Canada. Returned to a symbolic state of childhood, then, the unwed mother was intended to relearn the lessons of sexual behaviour and family mores that were encouraged in nineteenth century Quebec. How successful was this re-socialization? For the period in question, this is difficult to know, if not impossible, for case histories of individual women were not compiled with the scientific zeal with which social work now proceeds. Not until 1946 was there a study of recividism among Misericordia clients, and this looks at the period 1926-1945, thus is too late for present uses.[86] Many letters from one-time penitents attest to isolated cases of success - happy marriages, minor success stories. These represent a mere handful of the total clientele, however, whose fates, for the nineteenth century, are largely unknown.

We have seen that in spite of the efforts of religious orders to combat infanticide by rescuing foundlings - and health authorities

stressed the need for, and value of, this work - the economic and moral climate of the city fostered the abandonment of illegitimate children. An alternate tactic was required to save the souls of these children, and this approach was found in the refuge for unwed mothers. When failure to meet the ideal of feminine virtue resulted in unwed pregnancy, the response in France and New France, under the ancien régime, had been restraint in a refuge little differentiated from a prison, in which however the notion of separation of the virtuous from the bawdy was incorporated. By mid-nineteenth century restraint had shifted to rehabilitation through a focus on re-education. The unwed mother would, through a process of separation attended by protection, supervision, dependence and a disallowance of parental responsibility, undergo a re-socialization aimed at her incorporation into the accepted order of feminity.

How this process of rescue and rehabilitation fared in a different environment, the Northwest frontier, at the turn of the century, is the subject of the next chapter.

Notes - Chapter III

[1] Except where otherwise indicated "Quebec" is used throughout this chapter to indicate Lower Canada (1791-1867) and the Province of Quebec (post 1867).

[2] Louis Antier, La Survivance de la Seconde Coutume de Paris: Le Droit Civil du Bas Canada (Rouen: dissertation, Faculty of Law, University of Paris, 1923) pp. 7-15.

[3] Flandrin, P. 23, also James F. Traer, Marriage and the Family in 18th Century France (Ithaca and New York: Cornell University Press, 1980) pp. 15-16.

[4] Antier, p. 17.

[5] Articles of the Capitulation of Montreal Article XLII; Constitutional Act of 1791, Article XXXIII; Act of Union, 1840, Article XLVI; British North America Act, 1867, Section IX, Item 129; reprinted in W.P.M. Kennedy, Statutes, Treaties and Documents of the Canadian Constitution (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1930) pp. 30, 200 and 442.

[6] Antier, p. 54.

[7] Ibid., pp. 49-50.

[8] Susan Altschul and Christine Carron, "Chronology of Some Legal Landmarks in the History of Canadian Women," McGill Law Journal, 21, No. 4, (1975), p. 474.

[9] Antier, p. 85. The author is responsible for this and other translations unless otherwise cited.

[10] Code Civil de Québec, 1966, Title Eighth, Article 245.

[11] Memo on Child Welfare, Public Archives of Canada, MG I10 Vol. 43, File 206.

[12] Cornelius Jaenen, The Role of the Church in New France (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd., 1976) N. 52, Chapter II, p. vii.

[13] Ibid., p. 124.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid., p. 57.

[16] Ibid., p. 136.

[17] Mason Wade, The French Canadians (Toronto: MacMillan, 1968) Vol. I, p. 5. This practice has originated in France.

[18] Jaenen, p. 135.

[19] Ibid., p. 135.

[20] Isable Fouché-Delbosc, "Women of Three Rivers 1651-1663," Canadian Historical Review, 21, (June, 1940): 133.

[21] Peter N. Moogk, "Les Petits Sauvages: The Children of Eighteenth Century New France," in Joy Parr, Childhood and Family in Canadian History (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982), p. 27.

[22] Moogk, p. 27.

[23] Jaenen, p. 11. There is some disgreement about this date (1688); Eccles puts the establishment of the Bureau des Pauvres at 1685, see W.J. Eccles, The Canadian Frontier 1534-1760 (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1974), p. 69. Bilodeau, Comeau, Gosselin and Julien agree with Jaenen: Histoire des Canadas (Montreal: Hurtubise, 1978), p. 230.

[24] E.-Z. Massicote, "Premières Prisons des Femmes à Montreal," Bulletin des Recherches historiques 46 (1940): 40-43.

[25] Jaenen, p. 154.

[26] Massicote, p. 42.

[27] Jaenen, p. 110.

[28] E.-Z. Massicote, "Comment on disposait des enfants du roi," Bulletin des recherches historiques 37 (1931): 53.

[29] E.-Z. Massicote, "Le Travail des enfants à Montréal, au XVII^{e} siècle," Bulletin des recherches historiques 22 (1916): 57. Louis and Pierre, for example, were indentured at age three and two respectively; four years later Pierre was bound over again, by the first bond-holder, to another couple who were to care for him and receive his services.

[30] Massicote, "Comment on disposait," p. 53.

[31] Moogk, p. 27.

[32] Massicote, p. 52.

[33] Jaenen, pp. 111-112.

[34] Cole Harris, "If Poverty and Helplessness in Petite Nation," Canadian Historical Review 52 No. I (1971): 48.

[35] Yves F. Zoltvany, The French Tradition in America (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), p. 75.

[36] Michel Faillon, Vie de Madame d'Youville, Fondatrice des soeurs de la charité de Villemarie (Villemarie, 1852) p. 186.

[37] Near St. Ann's market. S.E. Dawson, Hand-Book for the City of Montreal and its Environs (Montreal: Dawson Brothers, Publishers, 1888) p. 52.

[38] Faillon, p. 186.

[39] Massicote, p. 42.

[40] Quoted by Lawrence M. Wilson, This Was Montreal in 1814, 1815, 1816 and 1817 (Montreal: The Chateau de Ramezay, 1960) p. 18.

[41] A.R.M. Lower in particular articulated the view that Catholicin French Canada perpetuated the "peasant-spiritual" outlook and divorced Quebec from the industrial and ideological changes in Anglo North America. See "Two Ways of Life: The Primary Antithesis of Canadian History," in Carl Berger, ed., Approaches to Canadian History (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967) pp. 15-28.

[42] See for example the intense philanthropic activity as represented L.A. Huguet-Latour's Annuaire de Ville-Marie, Origine, Utilité et Progrès des Institutions Catholiques de Montréal (Montréal: Eusèbe Sénécal, 1864) NAC, Library. The Montreal Protestant Orphans Home for example, was established in 1822, and a refuge for widows and orphans established by the Montreal Ladies' Benevolent Society in 1832; see P.T. Rooke and R.L. Schnell, "Childhood and Charity in Nineteenth Century British North America," Social History, 15 No. 29 (1982): 171.

[43] E.-Z. Massicote, "Le Refuge des Filles Repenties à Montréal," Bulletin des Recherches historiques, 46 No. 12 (December, 1940): 373-377.

[44] Sister Suzanne Collette, s.g.m., L'Oeuvre des Enfants trouvés, 1754-1946 (unpublished dissertation, University of Montreal, 1948), p. 24.

[45] Cross, p. 69, gives the price of 25 street car tickets in 1861 as one dollar.

[46] S. Collette, p. 24.

[47] Terry Copp, The Condition of the Working Class in Montreal, 1897-1929, The Anatomy of Poverty (Toronto: McClelland and Steward, 1974) pp. 88-97.

[48] J.I. Cooper, "The Social Structure of Montreal in the 1850's," Canadian Historical Association Report, June 1956, p. 63.

[49] Cooper, p. 63.

[50] Marie Lavigne and Jennifer Stoddart, "Women's Work in Montreal at the beginning of the century" in Women in Canada ed. Marylee Stephenson (Don Mills: General Publishing, 1977), p. 129.

[51] See for example Genevieve Leslie "Domestic Service in Canada 1880-1920" and Alice Klein and Wayne Roberts, "Beseiged Innocence: The "Problem" and Problems of Working Women - Toronto 1896-1914," in Women at Work 1850-1930, eds. Janice Acton, Bonnie Shepard and Penny Goldsmith (Toronto: Canadian Women's Educational Press, 1974).

[52] Lavigne and Stoddart, p. 135.

[53] Bradbury, pp. 4-5.

[54] The Montreal Herald, November 30, 1816, in L.M. Wilson, pp. 156-157.

[55] The Montreal Herald, December 24, 1814, in Wilson, p. 13.

[56] The very stigma under investigation renders suspect published or estimated illegitimacy rates.

[57] Sister Sainte-Mechtilde, s.m., "La Fille-Mère: Ses Problèmes Sociaux" (unpublished dissertation, Univ. of Montreal, 1945), p. 10.

[58] Jacques Henripin, "From Acceptance of Nature to Control: the Demography of the French - Canadians since the Seventeenth Century," in Rioux and Yves, eds., French Canadian Society (McClelland and Stewart, 1964), pp. 208-209. Henripin asserts that "family limitation hardly started in Montreal before 1925 among French-Canadian families. See also Angus Mclaren, "Birth Control and Abortion in Canada, 1870-1920," Canadian Historical Review 59 No. 3 (1978): 319-340.

[59] Hubert Charbonneau, ed., La Population du Quebec: études rétrospectives (Montréal: Les Editions du Boréal Express, 1973) p. 24.

[60] Madame Dandurand, "Moeurs Canadiennes-françaises" in Les Femmes du Canada Leurs Vies et leurs oeuvres (published for the Paris Exhibition, 1900) p. 31: also see Ruth H. Bloch, "American Feminine Ideals in Transition: The Rise of the Moral Mother," Feminist Studies, 4 (1976): 111.

[61] This biographical sketch is related by Father A. Fournet, Mère de la Nativité by L'Abbé E.J. Auclair, Histoire des Soeurs de Miséricorde de Montréal and Paul-Henri Barabé, O.M.I. Un Siècle de Miséricorde.

[62] Fournet, p. 36.

[63] Ibid., p. 45.

[64] After Pelagia, the prostitute-actress of antiquity who after her conversion to Christianity devoted herself to good works as a penance for having mis-used her energy and beauty.

[65] Fournet, pp. 22-23.

[66] Règlements pour les personnes qui se sont offertes à Dieu pour conduire l'oeuvre de l'hospice de Ste. - Pélagie érigé à Montréal, Livre des Origines, in Gingras, p. 21, trans. by the author.

[67] Fournet, p. 209, and also, Règlements, Chapitre Premier, 6e article, in Gingras, p. 22.

[68] Règlements, quoted in Fournet, p. 210.

[69] Bishop Bourget to Soeurs de Miséricorde letters, quoted by Fournet, p. 182.

[70] Règlements, in Gingras, p. 21.

[71] Soeur Sainte - Mechtilde, p. 173.

[72] Rothman, Discovery of the Asylum, pp. 212-213.

[73] Mère Marie de la Miséricorde, letter to Stanislas Drapeau, quoted in Gingras, p. 24.

[74] Règlements, in Fournet, pp. 59-60.

[75] Soeur Sainte - Blandine, "L'Organisation d'une Institution avec Service Social specialisé," (unpublished dissertation, University of Montreal, 1946), p. 88.

[76] Règlements, quoted in Fournet, p. 210.

[77] Ibid.

[78] Gingras, p. 18.

[79] Mere Marie des Sept Douleurs, Mémoires, quoted in Gingras, p. 15.

[80] Between 1848 and 1948, of about 40,000 penitentes, about 500 took vows as Magdalenes.

[81] Schnell, "Childhood as Ideology."

[82] Danylewycz, p. 11.

[83] J.-P. Gagnon, Rites et Croyances de la Naissance à Charlevoix, (Quebec: Leméac, 1979), p. 43.

[84] Census for Canada, 1901, Vol. III. p. 34.

[85] Copp, p. 209.

[86] Barabé, p. 299. Of 6,000 women who entered the convent between 1926 and 1945, approximately fifteen per cent were there to deliver their second or third illegitimate child.

CHAPTER IV

The Changing Role of the Misericordia in Edmonton 1900 - 1906

Introduction

In May, 1900, four sisters of the Misericorde, St. François de Sales, St. Frances Cabrini, St. Frédéric and St. Edmond, with a nurse, Jane Kennedy,[1] arrived in Edmonton by train. They came with the intent of providing care for unwed mothers in Edmonton as they had done in Montreal and, since 1899, in Winnipeg. As the Edmonton mission evolved, however, the scope of its work gradually extended, so that by 1906 the Misericordia Hospital had shifted its primary focus from service to unwed mothers to general nursing and medical care, with one branch of the hospital maintained for unwed mothers. In the new environment the order's educative role was redirected to a concern to save children from the Protestantism and secularism of the increasingly anglicized and to nursing education North-west. This chapter argues that this shift in emphasis of the general and of the educative roles of the Misericordia can best be understood in the light of two factors: firstly, differences in social customs and moral values between Montreal and Edmonton; and secondly, the change in the nature of the Edmonton milieu from a frontier town in 1900 to a modern, if small, city by 1910. Of the pioneering "character," it has been said that "it is not so much a matter of traits, of what people were or are, but how they responded to conditions, and how they changed their strategies when conditions changed."[2] The case of the Misericordia shows that the same is true of pioneering institutions as of individuals.

The Edmonton Misericordia: Institutional Initiatives and Problems

On December 10, 1899 Bishop Grandin of Saint Albert wrote to the

Reverend Mother of the Winnipeg Misericordia arranging to send to Winnipeg a young woman of his diocese whose salvation he saw to be at risk. Grandin viewed Mary Jane, a Métis woman, as subject to moral abandon, a state in which he feared most of her peers already lived. Grandin believed she might succumb, for she was living with her parents, a "brutal and drunken" father, and a mother "too soft and feeble-minded" to provide moral guidance. She could travel to Winnipeg in the spring, when the Sisters of Charity would be able to look after her children.[3] Grandin was unsure of her aptitudes, but thought she could be employed in the laundry. He counselled the Reverend Mother not to allow her to go out on her own, insisting that "all our Métisses must be above all removed from temptation . . . (as) they have no will power at all."[4] This attitude to native women would later be echoed by the Misericordia Sisters. In a post-script, Grandin added the following:

> If moral poverty were enough to attract you to our area I would take steps necessary to effect this, for we have much need of your services, but we are not advanced enough to provide much help. If, however, your society could establish itself without our help, I would beg of you to come to our assistance.[5]

In fact, from the point of view of the Catholic establishment, Grandin's fears were not unfounded. The illegitimacy rate in St. Joachim parish in Edmonton at the turn of the century was very high. In this franco-catholic parish of 547 souls, between fifty and eighty baptisms were recorded each year from 1899 to 1904.[6] In the baptismal records, illegitimacies are noted in any of three ways: the child is designated "illegitimate"; no father is named; or neither parent is named, the only information provided being the god-mother's name - usually Jane Kennedy, the nurse at the Misericordia. Table II indicates the illegitimacy ratio in St. Joachim as calculated from parish

baptismal registers.

TABLE II[7]

Illegitimacy Ratio, St. Joachim Parish, Edmonton, 1899 - 1904

1899	1900	1901	1902	1903	1904
7.1%	17.8%	9.7%	7.8%	10.9%	10.9%

It is not surprising that the missionary priests were anxious for the Misericorde to come to Edmondon to establish their mission. Many of the Oblates were French; in France at this time the illegitimacy ratio of 8.9 per cent was considered scandalously high.[8]

There were already connections between the Oblate missionaries in western Canada and the Misericordia.[9] Father Lacombe had been present, many years earlier when he was a young seminarian in Montreal, at the investiture of the Order of the Sisters of Misericordia in 1848.[10] In 1899, Father Leduc visited the Mother House in Montreal and obtained the agreement of the Misericordia to establish a mission in Edmonton.[11] By May of the following year, the new mission was under way.

The Edmonton Misericordia Chronicles portray five young women, strongly motivated in their faith to serve God in a Christian cause, determined to build from scratch in the rough and tumble environment of a Northwest town a mission equal to the one they had left in Montreal. In spite of the obstacles, they approached this task with an optimism and feistiness that saw them through the first difficult months. The Chronicles emphasize the positive, and to the frustration of the researcher on the hunt for clues as to the treatment of unwed mothers and the experiences of their children, tend to dwell on social and

religious events such as picnic outings with the Grey Nuns, visits to the Sisters of the Assumption and benedictions given by visiting priests. These were the high points in the Sisters' lives, the noteworthy events to be savoured and remembered in letters. The daily comings and goings, the problems of the patients, the accouchements, baptisms and the activities of the children in the home, were ordinary in comparison, and not perceived as very different, one suspects, from similar work undertaken in other Misericordia missions. Only the unusual cases are mentioned. It is possible, however, in reading the Chronicles along with other historical materials, to pinpoint the Sisters' major problems, as well as to glean a good idea of the prevailing atmosphere and general conditions of their mission.

The focus of the first newsletters from the Edmonton Misericordia is on the weather and the mental and physical health of the Sisters. The month of June, 1900 was one of fierce rainstorms alternating with blistering heat. Thick mud everywhere, including the floor of their little four-room house, made necessary the wearing of heavy wooden clogs. Epidemics of smallpox raged during the first year, creating a mood of pessimism among Edmontonians who said, after each spate of sickness died down, that "some other serious illness will declare itself before long."[12] Fear mixed with loneliness and an acute awareness of isolation from the familiar created a sense of disdain for the environment and all it held. "They tell us the rocks can speak to us," wrote one Sister in August 1900, "but we cannot believe that those of the north-west can reason."[13] The stress of a new environment was mental as well as physical. Even the High Mass, in which the Sisters could have expected to find reassurance that their accustomed way of life was not forever lost to them, was in this new territory changed

almost beyond recognition. It was sung in English, French, Cree and Russian, all in the same ceremony, a circumstance that necessitated many post-service cups of tea to ward off headache.[14] From the beginning the Sisters were expected to bolster the ranks of the male clergy at public masses, but little disappointment was registered when, as on July 29, 1900, heavy rains prevented them from assisting Father Leduc at a mass for five hundred natives. For women whose previous lives had been primarily urban in "le Canada civilisé," fear was not an uncommon enemy, and this often occasioned by the very people among whom they had come to work.[15]

The first accommodation secured by the Sisters did little to allay their discomfiture or to give them any sense of protection. Sister St. Christine gave a verbal account of this to Tony Cashman, saying it was a little house "where the wind, rain and snow were allowed in freely," and where anyone "speaking in one room could be heard all over the others."[16] In spite of this she claimed that the Sisters enjoyed "a real family life" in what was, after all, a temporary lodging. September saw a move to new and slightly larger premises. The move was undertaken with little difficulty and much improved spirits. "It was amusing, I suppose," reads the September newsletter, "to see us trekking down the street each with four chickens under our arms . . . ."[17] Here, in an old Hudson's Bay warehouse purchased by the ecclesiastical corporation and loaned to the Misericordia, located at what is now 98 Avenue and 111 Street the Sisters remained until March 1906.[18] Life was difficult but not impossible, and there was for the Sisters, considerable moral, if little financial support.

The greatest problem during the initial stages of the Edmonton mission was a lack of money. Anxiety about finances permeates the first

few years of the Chronicles.[19] This preoccupation is understandable in the light of the self-sufficiency expected of the mission. It had been agreed that the Oblate fathers and the ecclesiatical corporation would help the Sisters get started with a gift of land and a loan of $10,000,[20] but that their mission would have to be independent. It is doubtful that the loan was granted until the construction of the new hospital was begun in 1905. Whereas many charitable endeavours received government assistance at this time, both in Montreal and in the Northwest, and although the work of foundling care had, under the French regime in Quebec one hundred and thirty years earlier, been subsidized to some extent by the state, public aid was slow to materialize.[21] By 1898, the Miséricorde in Montreal had received, during fifty years of service, $4,800 in government help, out of total expenditures of some $337,000.[22] In the North West Territories public aid to hospitals was regulated by legislation.[23] By 1900 both the Edmonton General Hospital and the Saint Albert Hospital were receiving government subsidies according to patient per day scale that differentiated between patients who paid all, part or none of the regular fee. Ten cents per day was paid for every patient registered; an extra forty cents daily for every "partially free patient," and another forty cents per day on top of that for every "free patient."[24] But the Miséricorde was not eligible for those grants until it was incorporated in 1904.

As had been the case fifty years earlier in Montreal, the Sisters were forced to be self-reliant. A list of their household chores illustrates to some extent how onerous this was, Sister St. Rose de Lima Sacristine (who arrived shortly after the first influx) was responsible for laundry, barnyard, furnishings, collections; Sister St. François de Sales, - collections, pensionnaires, reception of patients, secretariat;

Sister St. Frédéric: - cooking, pharmacy, dispensary; Sister St. Edmond: - sewing, lingerie, cafeteria, dormitory.[25] Also mentioned, although not attributed to any one Sister in particular, were candlemaking, soap making, gardening, canning, making jam, and washing wool for mattresses. There is no record in the Chronicles of funds received from the Mother House, although trunks full of items both decorative and useful were delivered from time to time. It was a primary condition of outlying missions, however, that they generate funds to cover their expenses. Laundry, shirt-making, shoemaking, carpentry and knitting had been among the early money-making activities of the Montreal order, and some of these were taken up in Edmonton. The most frequently mentioned endeavour in the Chronicles, though, is the collection of alms, or "l'oeuvre des quêtes." In this the Sisters became very proficient. They set about raising funds in an organized manner, travelling to towns as far away as Calgary, where there was little sympathy for their cause, and Medicine Hat, where both Catholics and Protestants contributed generously. They were not without success, a fact which on at least one occasion enticed competitors into the collecting business.[26]

The other method of raising money to pay the expenses of the mission was the charging of fees to patients. The Sisters' preoccupation with these levies, in the newsletters, reinforces the impression of general anxiety about economics that pervades the Chronicles during the first years. "We received a pensionnaire today at $2.00 per day; we were proud of this, but the joy was shortlived . . . ."[27] As late as March, 1904, when their doctor sent a patient at $2.00 a day it merited a "Dieu le bénit," for money was still in short supply. Although the mission was perfectly willing and even eager to accept non-paying clients as long as they truly had no means of support, the Sisters went so far as

hiring a lawyer, on March 26, 1901, to help them collect from the husband of an ex-patient who, they know, was perfectly capable of paying.[28]

As well as the problems caused by the climate, geography and domestic economics, there was another difficulty, not unconnected to these but more elusive as to both its identification and its explanation. This was the fact that, although the tiny quarters of the Sisters often seemed over-crowded, there was no instantaneous recognition among the population of Edmonton that here, at last, was a much-needed refuge for homeless and destitute unmarried mothers. All sorts of patients, visitors and guests, both paying and impecunious, came to stay with the Sisters, but to the consternation of the latter, not many of these were unwed mothers. Although some single girls came to last out their confinements, the majority of the patients were married women. There were mixed feelings about these clients. On the one hand they usually paid their fees; on the other, the "pensionnaires" were often accompanied from afar by their husbands, some of whom turned up to take meals with their wives, and others by their children, who had to be looked after as well. From the beginning, too, the Sisters' mission served as an orphanage.[29] The Chronicles register a certain perplexity about the surfeit of "dames pensionnaires" and "enfants" contrasted to the relative infrequency of "penitentes." On December 21, 1903, for example, a Sister wrote that "a poor Protestant woman came to place with us a child of one month; she seemed ashamed to admit that he belongs to her fifteen-year old daughter. Asked why she did not send the daughter to us she replied that "she did not know about our house - crê-tu que je te crê! - I assure you there is no lack of these unfortunate girls . . . . if they all came here the house would soon be

filled up."[30] The interjection - "Do you think I can believe you?" - belies the Sister's scepticism about what she regarded as a poor excuse. The fact that not many illegitimate babies were born at the Miséricorde during the first few years did not please the Sisters. The following table indicates the small size of the operation and the low incidence of births at the hospital.

Table III

Residents, Baptisms and Illegitimacies at the Edmonton Misericordia,[31] 1900 - 1905

	1901	1902	1903	1904	1905
Residents (December)	14	27	23	23	37
Penitents (December)	4	4	3	2	3
Baptisms (all year)	3	5	8	12	7
Illegitimate Baptisms (all year)	2	4	5	8	6

Of six illegitimate births in St. Joachim in 1901, only two unwed mothers came to the Misericordia; in 1902, four of six and 1903, five of seven.[32] These represent only the baptised Roman Catholic illegitimate births; there is no way to know how many illegitimacies occurred where the child was not baptised. This shows an increasing use of the Misericordia but one which must be measured against the growth in the overall population, which was rapid during these years. Clearly the Sisters were operating under conditions very different to those in Montreal. These differences cannot be understood only in the light of a smaller population base, for illegitimacies rate in St. Joachim parish alone were in excess of the number of Miséricorde births. Other factors must be considered in order to understand why the Sisters were not successful in attracting more unwed mothers to their refuge.

The Northwest Territories, Circa 1900: Demographic, Economic and Altitudinal Factors Affecting the Edmonton Misericordia

In order to understand the change in institutional strategy of the Misericordia and to appreciate the reasons for it, it is necessary to appreciate a number of factors pertaining to socio-economic and cultural conditions in Edmonton and surrounding areas, circa 1900.

The 1901 Census gives the population of Alberta as 65,876, although some doubts exist about the consistency and accuracy of enumeration returns at that time.[33] Between 1900 and 1906, however, it is certain that the primary demographic reality in the Territories was rapid population growth accompanied by an equally dramatic change in the ethnic composition of the population. By 1906 the new Province of Alberta counted 185,400[34] people of at least fifteen national and linguistic identities.

On the eve of the twentieth century immigrants from Belgium, Britain, Holland, France, Scandinavia, Russia, the Ukraine, China, Japan, Germany and the United States, as well as from other parts of Canada, flocked to Alberta, drawn by the promise of free land. Families passed quickly through small commercial outposts, scattering to homesteads throughout the prairie and foothill country. Aside from family groups there were single men who were traders, voyageurs, hunters and farm laborers. Many lived a somewhat nomadic existence and were known by the Francophone population as "blancs de passage."[35] It was less usual but not unknown for single women to come west as well, often accompanying their parents but occasionally on their own. All of these immigrants quickly outnumbered Native groups, who in 1885 had been four times as numerous as Europeans. By 1906 the balance had shifted completely: only 46 per cent of the people in Alberta, including

Natives and Métis, has been born in Canada.[36]

In 1885, among both the European and Metis populations, the predominant language was French and the principal religion was Roman Catholicism.[37] French Canadians outnumbered both the Scots and the English. Of the Métis enumerated in the 1885 Census, 94 per cent were Francophone. Roman Catholics were twice as numerous as all denominations of Protestants. By 1900, however, the tide of Anglophone immigration had well begun, and from that time on the Francophone population declined in proportion to English speaking residents.

For French-speaking Catholics, despite hopes to the contrary, it was a matter of consolidating the initiatives already taken in settling the west, rather than expanding their population base. Whereas the population of Edmonton climbed from 2,626 in 1901 to 11,167 in 1906, that of the Francophone Saint Albert stayed relatively stable, increasing from 472 to 543.[38] In Saint Boniface Mgr. Langevin said in 1898 that he needed more settlers to consolidate the position of the Franco-Catholics in Red River and Assiniboine districts, as well as all along the banks of the Saskatchewan. Franco-Catholic leaders in both the east and the west shared the belief that French Canadians belonged in an agricultural society, and that homesteads in Western Canada were preferable to of factory towns in New England.[39] According to Painchaud, the perception in eastern French Canada that a westward Francophone emigration would undermine the viability of Franco-Catholic culture in North America by splitting its geographic base[40] caused those who had left Quebec to struggle even more vigourously to establish centres in the Northwest, despite their efforts, however, la francophonie in the West continued to lose ground to other European groups. Certainly the diminishing Franco-Catholic influence in the west

was one reason for both the coming of the Misericordia and for its failure to attract a larger number of penitents than it did.

An aspect of demography that relates directly to the question of unwed maternity is the proportion of women to men. The scarcity of single women to single men is characteristic of Alberta at this time. Although the overall ratio of single women to single men improved slightly from 15:24 in 1901 to 16:24 in 1906, the ratio of women of marriageable and reproductive age, fifteen to forty-four years old, to men of the same age, diminished significantly from 18:24 in 1901 to 14:14 in 1906.[41]

The relative numbers of men and women made marriage a strong probability even for women with a child or children. Statistically, 83 percent of women over 19 in Alberta in 1901 were married; of those twenty-five years and over, the records show that 100 per cent were married.[42] Indeed the Misericordia had difficulty keeping nurses, who invariably married after a few years in Edmonton, as did a number of the "consacrées." A woman on the Northwest frontier was unlikely to stay single long. Even prostitutes often made "good" marriages and turned respectable in the same towns where they had plied their trade. In a country of young men the marriage prospects for women are enhanced, and the potential for illegitimacy reduced, particularly in a society where agriculture is the primary occupation and a wife essential as a help-mate.

Another factor bearing on illegitimacy was, the question of whether of not a single woman could have afforded to support herself and a child, in the economic climate of the Northwest. As early as 1885, agriculture was the main occupation of the 'European' people of Alberta, with 1584 farmers, ranchers, dairymen or cowboys, in a population of

15,533. In contrast, 689 people were employed in commerce and the professions, 421 in industry and 185 in domestic service. By 1900 the number of industrial establishments had almost doubled over sixteen years from sixty in 1885 to 105 in 1901 whereas the population had increased about five times.[43] Because agricultural workers can be paid in services and goods, it is difficult to specify exact values for their labour. Women's agricultural work moreover is often performed by family members who are not paid at all. But industrial employment and wages indicate in approximate terms at least the level of pay for female labour. Table IV indicates comparative salaries and numbers of employed; it is based on all industrial employees in Alberta in 1901 and those employed in five cotton mills only in Montreal.

TABLE IV

Industrial Wages, Montreal and Alberta[44]

1901

Employees by Sex and Age	Five Cotton Mills Montreal	All of Alberta
Males employed	3156	138
Average annual wage	$414	$2,843
Women employed	2416	17
Average annual wage	$230	$344
Children employed	1123	25
Average annual wage	$125	$155

The relative affluence of labouring Albertans compared to Montrealers at this time is clear from a comparison of the average annual male wage earnings.

For a Montreal mill family to earn the same as one man might earn in Alberta, would require that both husband and wife, as well as seventeen children, labour in the factory. If the wages of a husband could easily support a family in Alberta, there may have been greater incentive than if otherwise for women to have married, and given the shortage of females, more likelihood for them to have done so. For women who did earn their own wages, work in rural districts was likely limited to domestic service, but in the city included a variety of jobs such as shop-assistant, law clerk, telephone operator, shirt-making, laundress and domestic servant.[45] The latter earned fifteen to thirty dollars monthly, twice the wages paid in Toronto.[46] Salaries were such that the Young Women's Christian Association could charge $4.00 per week for a room and two meals daily.[47] Before the Association's rooming house had even opened there were seven applications. It seems that single women could and did support themselves, although often just as stop-gap before marriage, in Edmonton at the turn of the century. On the other hand, of one hundred fifty boarding spaces in Edmonton in 1907, only four indicated they would accept single women. What economies could have allowed, social pressure may have discouraged.

After the passing of the Northwest Territories Act in 1875, the regulations governing marriage, family relations and the care of abandoned or neglected children in Alberta, prior to 1905, were based on a combination of English law and the Canadian legal code as interpreted by local magistrates.[48] When the Canadian Criminal Code was promulgated in 1892 its provisions were applied in the Northwest Territories.[49] As the area became more densely populated, however, the Legislative Assembly of the Territories saw fit to pass Ordinances regulating various aspects of social life on a more regional basis. By 1898 legal

marriage in the Northwest Territories was defined by Statute.[50] Duly ordained ministers and clergymen of any church were authorized to perform marriages after the presentation by the couple of a marriage licence or thrice published banns, in the presence of two witnesses, and with the proviso that the marriage be registered in the Department of Vital Statistics. This attempt to regularize marital proceedings can be assumed to have met with success in populated areas of European settlement, but on the fringes of these communities it is questionable how quickly official marriages replaced the older forms of consensual union that had been current in fur-trade society.

As Sylvia Van Kirk has made clear, the definition of what constituted legal marriage was in question during the pre-settlement era.[51] Also ambiguous were the rights and obligations entailed by marriage. Most questionable of all, in the minds of some missionaries and judges, was the legitimacy of the children born to the "country wed." In these early days the longevity and perceived legitimacy of the country marriage depended on the will of the husband, who in the early days of the trade could either "turn off" his country wife when retiring from the employ of the trading company, or continue to recognize the marriage either by settling in Canada or taking his wife back to the British Isles. The outcome was a matter of considerable importance to the "country-born," the children of fur-trade society who, if their father abandoned his country wife to marry a European woman, were considered illegitimate. In the event of the birth of half-siblings to the father's new wife, the possibility of a contested patrimony could and sometimes did arise, with varying outcomes in the courts[52] and with continuing ambiguity as to the definition of what constituted a legal marriage.

That this ambiguity regarding marriage persisted up to the pre-confederation period in Alberta is clear from the Sheran case (1899) in which Judge Scott of Calgary was required to rule on the devolution of the estate of one Nicolas Sheran.[53] Sheran, who died in 1882, had married à la facon du pays in 1878, one Mary Brown of the Piegan tribe, by whom he had two sons. At the time of the trial these children were seven and nine years old and living with their mother among the Piegan. Because Sheran and Brown had not been married by a clergyman, Scott ruled that the estate would not go to Sheran's sons; nor was Brown entitled to any interest therein. This judgement was rendered in spite of the fact that Nicolas Sheran had been a Roman Catholic, and the difficulties of finding a priest to marry him would have been considerable.[54] In deciding against the legitimacy of the marriage the judge referred to the conflicting precedents of other cases; to English jurisprudence, and to the 1898 Marriage Ordinance. On the strength of the latter he ruled that Sheran and Brown had not been legally married and that their sons were illegitimate. The estate thus devolved upon Sheran's sister. Although there appeared to be little doubt that Nicolas considered Mary Brown to be his true wife, the court found otherwise and his children suffered the consequences of their parents' perceived irregular conduct. The courts in this case upheld the letter and presumably the spirit of the marriage ordinance.

Another example of the juridical enforcement of the Marriage Ordinance and also Section 278 of the Criminal Code of Canada[55] can be seen in the Queen V. "Bear's Shin Bone" (1899) in which the accused was convicted of polygamous marriage, having been married to both "Free Cutter Woman" and "Killed Herself" at the same time. Judge Rouleau held the marriage customs of the Blood Indians to be contrary to Canadian law

and Bear's Shin Bone was jailed accordingly.[56]

The ambiguity over the official nature of marriage was an important influence on the operations of the Misericordia. The stigma of illegitimacy rests on a careful and precise articulation of what constitutes a sanctioned marriage. Without such definition, the question of legitimate birth cannot encompass the degree of importance that it otherwise assumes. Native cultures, Métis society, the incoming groups of American Canadian and Europeans, all had different and sometimes conflicting ideas about the nature and contracting of marriage. In Edmonton, with the absence of that uniformity of value which in Quebec was a factor in the widespread view of bastardy as shameful, as stigma, the notion of rescue from that stigma was not a compelling one.

How can this notion of "illegitimacy as stigma" be measured? Peter Ward used the existence of affidavits of affiliation, filed by women before the birth of an illegitimate child, in order that paternal support might be claimed for the infant as evidence that illegitimacy was not subject to the same degree of stigma as nineteenth century fictional accounts would have us believe.[57] In the Territories, the 1903 Ordinance for the Support of Illegitimate Children specified that such affidavits could be filed "while the mother was pregnant or within six months after the birth of the child, . . . declaring that the person afterwards charged in the action is really the father of the child," and deposited in the office of the Clerk of the Supreme Court for the judicial district in which she resides.[58] The text of the Ordinance is such that the intent of the legislation is ambiguous. It is unclear whether it was meant to prevent unwed mothers claiming paternal support (as no action was to be sustained unless the affidavit had been filed)

or to give them recourse to such support. In any case, as no affidavits have been found for the Territories,[59] other evidence must be considered for western Canada.

Reported court records, although they represent selected cases, do give a fairly reliable indication of juridical attitudes considered noteworthy at a given time in the past. In the absence of specific cases dealing with illegitimate children, actions involving women's sexual conduct may give some guide as to the discrepancy between a legal code that attempted to order social mores and the actual behaviour of the population subject to its regulation. Given the judgements rendered in two cases of seduction heard in the local courts, it would seem that women were often accorded considerable sympathy and tolerance by presiding magistrates.

In September 1902, for example, one Lougheed of Medicine Hat appealed his sentence of one year in prison for having seduced under promise of marriage one Kate McCutcheon.[60] Kate had been judged to be "of previously chaste character"[61] in spite of the fact that "the illicit connection was renewed about once a week, each time under a separate and distinct promise of marriage, from June 1901 to December 24, 1902." Moreover the judge ruled that reasonably speaking, "this young woman's faith in the accused should have been shaken long before the occurrence in question," from which had resulted a pregnancy. He noted that it was "rather difficult to believe that this particular promise of September, 1902, repeated for the sixtieth or seventieth time under the very same circumstances, was really and truly the inducement to which she allowed herself to yield on that day."[62] Nevertheless the court excused the girl's conduct, and sustained Lougheed's conviction.

Another case of upholding the "previously chaste character" of a

seduced female is that of Lillie Hunt, on whose behalf charges were laid against one Rioux in spite of circumstances which seem to confirm her poor reputation.[63] Lillie had been associating with a Lizzie Ross, a woman of dubious moral integrity who worked at a shooting gallery. She had discussed with Ross "how she could avoid trouble as a result of carnal intercourse with men." She had been seen in compromising position with another man and had accompanied the accused to a hotel, registered as Mr. and Mrs. -- and had prostituted herself to him for money. The judge found in Lillie's favour, however, ruling that in spite of the foregoing evidence she had not been proven to be of previously unchaste character. In the few reported court cases involving sexual irregularities, then, the magistrates appear to have adopted a lenient attitude toward white women, although not necessarily toward their Native counterparts who married whites. While the legislated view was fairly rigid, the interpretation of the law in local courts varied considerably,[64] reflecting a high degree of ambivalence towards both women and the exercise of patriarchal authority.

Unfortunately we know nothing of the fate of Kate McCutheon's or Lillie Hunt's illegitimate progeny. What effect, if any, did it have on the mothers or on the children, that the fathers were jailed? And what, if anything, can be said in general about the offspring of illicit unions in turn of the century Alberta, save that they often did not inherit? Were they welcomed and nurtured as future help-mates and companions in a sparsely populated rural economy? Was their illegitimate status simply irrevelant? Or did the stigma of their birth cause rejection, psychological or physical, and manifest itself in a range of mechanisms including infanticide as well as disinheritance, as it had done in European civilization for centuries past?

There is no published material about infanticide in white society on the frontier, and there appears to be little archival material apart from police files, where a number of cases are reported. In two of these, clearcut cases of child murder by the unmarried mothers of newborn infants, the local magistrates refused to press charges on the grounds that the women had already suffered enough from their predicaments. The details of the cases make it easy to agree with this verdict.

In one case, Elizabeth C., employed as a domestic servant at the Phillips' ranch, tried to conceal her pregnancy, but unsuccessfully so, according to a neighbor's testimony at the inquest.[65] When she went into labour both the farmer and his wife were away for the day. Lizzie asked a house-guest to hitch up the team to take her to her mother's, some thirty-five miles away, as she was ill, so she said, but he refused, saying he could not let her take the horses in the absence of the mistress of the house, even though the later admitted that he had a good idea of the reason for her request. She retired to her room, from whence emitted sounds that left no doubt in his mind as to the nature of the event taking place. Later in the day he found the sink and floor downstairs spattered with blood. When Mrs. Phillips returned at five in the afternoon he told her what had transpired; she went up to see Lizzie, who was in bed, whether from weakness, ignorance or fear we do not know, insisting still on her excuse of "illness." Mrs. Phillips returned downstairs, cooked and ate dinner, then came back to worm the truth out of the servant girl. She searched the room and found the child, still in its birthing caul, dead in a box under the bed.

Another case involved a second domestic, this time an Ann M., the sole servant at the Camrose Inn.[66] Her labour too was unattended in

spite of the sure knowledge of bystanders that she was pregnant and in labour, as they later admitted to the magistrate. The hotel walls were so thin as to leave little opportunity for privacy; but no-one called a doctor until after the police had come. A boarder found the child in the hotel's outdoor privy. An autopsy later proved that the mother's claim to a stillborn infant was false. It was clear to the magistrate that Anna had, in desperation or extraordinary ignorance, disposed of her infant with little or no attempt to give it any life-giving care. Anna, like Lizzie C., appears to have lived in a sea of silent disapproval that condemned her to a lonely pregnancy and solitary labour for which she was utterly unprepared and unable to deal with. No sooner were the dead infants discovered than the police were called in. No-one offered to assist these women, or call a doctor in time to have prevented the infant's death, a fact which may have moved the sympathy of the magistrates. In neither were charges laid against the women. The coroner chose to find, in one case in direct contradiction to the evidence of the doctors, that the infant had been stillborn, thus circumventing Sections 239 and 240 of the Criminal Code. While the magistrates' exoneration of the mothers indicates a commendable tolerance of their plight, and represents a departure, at least superficially, from the exercise of a unilateral paternalistic authority, it demonstrates at the same time an attitude to the infants that is casual if not indifferent. And this is the same indifference to children born as bastards that was seen to be at the very heart of the stigmatization of unwed maternity and illegitimacy: an indifference born of the will to preserve male prerogatives over family life through the creation of a code regulating the sexual activity of women. Here we have not an example of the Christian conformity to social norms in

marital affairs that was endorsed and taught by the Misericordia, but instead a manifestation of a much more ancient and anarchic form of social ordering, the legitimation of infanticide by governing authorities when the infant in question was born out of wedlock. This masquerades as sympathy for the desperate plight of the unwed mother, an attitude likely to have been detrimental to the efforts of the Misericordia to rehabilitate unwed mothers on the frontier. For just as a relatively relaxed attitude to unwed maternity would have meant that little incentive existed for women to flee from their families to bear an illegitimate child, the quasicondoning of infanticide may have reduced considerably the life-span of a forever unknowable number of newborn in remote and isolated homesteads and camps. Journals of law reports recount remarkably few cases of infant murder, Canadian Criminal Cases giving only one, and that in Saskatchewan in 1914.[67] Did infanticides go unreported, their perpetrators unchallenged? Or was society in the Northwest by 1900 still little acclimatized to European marital standards? Most importantly, perhaps, what of the illegitimate children who lived? In 1903 the Territorial Legislature passed an Ordance Respecting the Action for Seduction,[68] attempting to regularize the support of illegitimate or abandoned children. A data source as yet unexplored is the record of abandoned children in the various papers of female religious orders in western Canada missions - the Sisters of the Assumption, Sisters of Ste. Anne, of Providence, of Chadty, as well as the Grey Nuns. A limited but useful source of evidence is the record of reported court cases.

These indicate that the Territories was slow to act in the matter of child custody, for until 1905 there was no regional legislation bearing on the custody of children, legitimate or otherwise. Prior to this

time, the judiciary took as its guide custody cases tried in England.[69] In reported cases, it appears that the paternal authority was usually upheld. In 1893, for example, in Farrell v. Wilton, the judge found in favour of the father, Wilton, who, on the death of his wife some time earlier, had given over his infant daughter to a couple named Farrell, saying he would not reclaim her, and that she would be theirs to raise. When several years later he did return, taking the child for what was meant to be a visit at Christmas time, but never returning her to the Farrells, the foster parents protested and claimed damages for support and maintenance during the time the child had lived with them. The judge found that "the defendant had the right to revoke the authority he gave with respect to the custody of the child at any moment,"[70] quoting an English commentator who perceived not so much the positive as the negative attributes of legal guardianship transferred from the natural parents, asserting that:

> No one is bound to pay another for maintaining his children either legitimate or illegitimate except he has entered into some contract to do so. Everyone is to maintain his own children as he himself shall think proper and it requires a contract to enable another person to do so and charge him for it in action.[71]

Court records, selective though they are, do reflect social attitudes. The interpretation of legislation by regional magistrates can be read as indicative of the way a certain community is likely to regard an issue. The court records in Alberta reflect a variety of attitudes. In the case of native or Métis women, (the Sheran case) the magistrates seem to have been harsh, or assiduous, in declaring marriages to be illegal when the parties involved followed the "custom of the country." In the Farrell case the paternal authority was upheld. When white women were involved (Lougheed and Rioux cases and those of

Anna M. and Elizabeth C.) in seduction or infanticide however, judges appear to have exercised considerable tolerance. Given the profound cultural diversity of the people, their small number, the balance of sex distribution weighted heavily in favour of men, the regionality of legislative interpretation, the difficulty of the established churches in providing adequate religious support, the lack of a single tradition practice of marriage it is not surprising that frontier attitudes were rife with ambivalence. The absence of a consolidated outlook in questions of marriage and the legitimacy of children meant that illegitimacy as stigma had a less profound grip on the mentality of the people than was the case in Montreal. For the Misericordia Sisters, this meant that relatively few unwed mothers experienced the social rejection, or fear of it, that in Montreal made them seek refuge in the convent hospital.

Yet another factor that made the Miséricorde "solution" to the problem of illegitimacy less than popular, among a segment of the population at least, was the attitude of the missionaries, both male and female, to Métis women, particularly those they saw as unconforming to the Church's moral code. Bishop Grandin's opinion that Metis women in general lacked self-control was echoed by the Misericordia Sisters, who were intolerant of what they saw as dangerously immoral behaviour among all women, but thought Métis women particularly prone to depravity. The image of the "pauvre brébeuf éganée," the little lost lamb who needed only to be shown the way to salvation, was the predominant theme, in the Montreal Misericordia, in the treatment of unwed mothers by 1900. This image, however, was inconsistent with the independent behaviour of the frontier women who, having been delivered of their infants at the Misericordia and having left them there in the Sisters' care, frequently

turned up later to reclaim them, bringing along or sending in their stead husbands, lawyers and lovers to plead their cases. The Métis mother of "little Mary," for instance, who had been three years with the Sisters, turned up in June 1904 to take away her daughter, making a dreadful scene and eventually succeeding in leading away the crying child. Mme R. a Métisse, drove the Sisters "to distraction," between December 1900 and June 1901, with scenes in which she tried to reclaim Agnès, her daughter. Eventually the Sisters conceded, but dressed the child in her original ragged clothing to send her off, to the Mother's astonishment.[72] The persistence of the mother did nothing to reassure them about the future happiness or well-being, of the child; nor did the alternate appearances of past and present "husbands," one of whom was Agnès' father, who paid for her keep. Some women did not stay at the Misericordia because they were unwilling to make the required sacrifices.[73] Obviously, other options must have been open to them. In a society where women's company was in high demand, where marriage traditions were flexible, the relative infrequency among unwed mothers of an inclination to be repentant for what did not seem wrong, is not surprising. It was, however, a matter of scandal for the newly arrived Misericordia Sisters, who were quite open, in the newsletters, about their feelings as to unrepentant sinners. One woman from St. Albert was scathingly described as "an absolute trollop . . . all got up in silk from boots to bonnet . . . nothing but caprice."[74] In spite of the need for paying patients, she was not permitted to stay. The reaction of the Misericordia Sisters to conditions in the Northwest was such that some women, who in Montreal might have been absorbed into the large and more anonymous Misericordia institution, were unable to withstand the close scrutiny of the Misericordia. This may have been the case especially

for Métis women, as the chronicles identify them as particularly difficult.

The danger in emphasizing the hostility the Sisters may have felt towards Métis women, in their reluctance to relinquish their children in order to reunite families, is that in children's homes in eastern Canada, Protestant administrators showed a similar disinclination to surrender their wards to parents who were not Metis but were poor, and seen as tainted with immorality as an extension of their poverty. Rooke and Schnell point out that in Protestant orphans' Homes of Kingston, Toronto and Ottawa, "parents requesting the return of their children were usually identified as part of a certain unscrupulous class of dependent poor willing to fob off their familial responsibilities onto charity."[75]

Increasingly, from 1906 on, the emphasis was on the Catholic socialization and education of children. The orphanage built in 1911, a wing of the hospital, by 1920 had space for sixty-five children.[76] From the earliest years, the Sisters emphasized the necessity of a Catholic upbringing above all else, and became embroiled in custody battles in order to secure the religious education of the child. Between December, 1900 and June, 1901, for example, the Sisters were drawn into a custody struggle in which a father of three children had placed them at the Miséricorde because they had been ill-cared for by the mother, who was "living in concubinage with another man and thus had no rights over her children."[77] The mother made repeated efforts to regain her children, coming to the convent time and time again, sending others in her stead, employing a lawyer, and creating long and noiseome scenes. At one point in May the Sisters were forced to agree to allow Mme. R. to take the little girl (the two boys having been sent to the Grey Nuns' orphanage),

because they had no court order to keep her, but it seems that in the end this did not work out, for in September, 1907, the father returned with $23.00 payment for the child's keep.[78] There is no doubt that the Sisters sided throughout with the father. The Chronicles for December 25 on that year contain a note about a child who is in danger of losing her faith because she is living with a Protestant step-mother - the inference being that she would be better off living with the sisters. On another occasion a woman who had already brought her infant grandson to the Sisters returned with the child's mother, a girl of fifteen; she was Protestant but was taken in on the hope that she would convert. A lawyer was engaged to draw up papers for her to sign, giving the Sisters custody of the child to that they could "make of him a little Christian without fear of being troubled later" by the mother.[79] The same was the case a few months later when "a poor unfortunate woman from Regina" signed over custody of her child so that the Sisters could educate him as they saw fit, that is, as a Catholic. While these attitudes are perhaps obvious ones for the Sisters to have demonstrated, it is interesting that they did not by any means refuse non-Catholics. Instead they saw the assistance offered to Protestants as a means of furthering the Franco-catholicization of the Northwest, hoping, if not to convert the mother, at least to baptize and educate the child.

While it would be misleading to overemphasize the antagonism of the Sisters towards Métis women, their attitude highlights the attempt of "le Canada civilisé" to impose on the vast Northwestern half of the country the morals and values that English, Scots and French legislators social leaders, politicians and entrepreneurs had, by 1900, successfully established in Eastern Canada. Nineteenth century Canadians recognized that it is through the family, in the early years of a child's life,

that the patterns of social life are set.[80] If the expansionist aims of either Anglophone or Francophone visionaries[81] were to be realized, it was crucial to instill in the people moral values attaching to family life that were replicas of those in the East. The coming of the Misericordia to Edmonton can be seen in the light of such hopes. But poised against these efforts to acclimatize the prairies and the Northwest to Eastern values were many obstacles. One was the general shortage of women; another, the shortage of priests; another, the pre-existence of less formal marriage customs. To the missionaries, these factors were symbolic of a real or imaginary element of sexual abandon that loomed as part of the wilderness they were trying to bring under control. The Métisses were reminders of the precarious position of white society in the northwest. These women by their very presence could not help but recall to the missionaries the generational aspects of sexuality in a cultural context that, if the marriage custom of the Native half of the couple prevailed, would be outside the realm of Church sanction and influence. The Sisters over-reacted to the visible threat of what appeared to them to be sexual immorality, but which can also be seen as greater tolerance for sexual and marital non-conformity than was current in eastern Canada. The attitude of the Sisters toward unwed mothers as "lost little lambs" somewhat inappropriate to their new environment. The demand for institutional care for unwed mothers simply did not exist in Edmonton of 1900, to the extent it had done in the east.

Edmonton, 1900 - 1914: Frontier Town to Modern City

It has been shown that despite a high rate of illegitimacy in

franco-Catholic Edmonton circa 1900 the Misericordia home failed to attract a great many unwed mothers during the first years of their Edmonton operation. Morever, it has been suggested that in the social milieu of Edmonton at the turn of the century the Misericordia, whose role as a rescue agent for unwed mothers and illegitimate children was reduced as compared to what it had been in Montreal, turned to general nursing and found Edmontonians responsive to the role the Order could play in medical and health care of a general nature. It remains to document this change in institutional emphasis and to outline the circumstances that allowed, or prompted, such a change. This section will show that the condition of Edmonton as an urban environment in transition from a frontier town to modern, if small city, gave direction to the Misericordia's new role. If a metaphorical vacuum existed in the frontier town of Edmonton in 1900, for the Order, this was, as the town burgeoned into a city, filled by the urgency of the need for general nursing care in a rapidly expanding and relatively remote urban centre.

J.M.S. Careless has placed the beginning of urban development in Edmonton and Calgary in the 1880's,[82] asserting that both cities were from the start "involved in the steam-and-steel technology and transport" and that "railway technology . . . integrated the new western cities into a continent-wide metropolitan pattern." In 1906 Edmonton had only two wholesale firms; by 1911, almost fifty. Between 1904 and 1914, land annexations by Edmonton almost tripled the area of the city. By 1911, over a third of Alberta's population was urban, with Edmonton having "a far higher proportion of the province's total population than Toronto had in reference to Ontario at the time of Confederation."[83] Photographs of Edmonton in 1900 show a haphazard clustering of residences scattered around Jasper Avenue, a thoroughfare

as yet unpaved, but with telegraph poles lining the trail.[84] In 1891 the railway connected Edmonton to Calgary, but the actual station was in Strathcona, on the south side of the North Saskatchewan River, a ferry ride away from Edmonton centre. It was not until 1905 that the Canadian Northern connected the north shore directly to Winnipeg, and until 1913 that the High Level Bridge joined Edmonton to the Calgary link of the Canadian Pacific Railway.[85] The Edmonton City Directory for 1908 gives a combined Edmonton Strathcona population of 41,500. By this time Edmonton owned and operated its own water service, sewage system, electric light and telephone systems, and boasted thirteen banks, twenty-two hotels, two daily, five weekly and three monthly newspapers, four saw mills, two flour mills, a brewery, a wood mill and wood-ware factory, three steam laundries, two brick-yards and a seven-story packing and storage plant.[86] Careless maintains that by 1914 Edmonton was a modern city if a small one, judged by criteria such as patterned residential districts, physical layout of streets and parks, social awareness and amenities and occupational patterning.[87] This assessment is supported by photographic evidence presented in any number of popular historical works, which show Edmonton as a bustling city, trolley-cars trundling down a much changed Jasper Avenue in front of imposing and marble columned buildings, automobiles and pedestrians vying for right of way, and multitunous commercial establishments posting their names and messages on storefronts.[88]

In terms of health care for the growing city, Edmonton by 1908 had two health inspectors.[89] The Misericordia was the third general hospital in Edmonton. In 1895 the Grey Nuns of Montreal had built their General Hospital. Shortly after the Misericordia opened as a Maternity hospital, Edmonton's Public Hospital opened, furnished by the Masonic

Lodge, the Odd Fellows, the Forresters and the Women's Christian Temperance Union.[90] By October, 1905, the Misericordia Hospital construction was well under way.[91] By 1908 there were also a Sanitarium Hospital and an Isolation Hospital in Edmonton.[92] Not until 1912, seven years after the Misericordia Hospital for general care had opened, did a Protestant hostel for unwed mothers open, the Beulah Home. The first report of its director reflected a modern approach: "Our girls," wrote Miss Chatham, "are not degenerates, they need all our help, and often can be started on a new life and for that reason we want to keep them separate from delinquents of the street as far as possible."[93] In established areas a whole decade of development can be considered all in one piece; but in a city growing from 2,626 in 1901 to 11,167 in 1906,[94] each year of growth can be seen almost as another stage of expansion. The population of Edmonton in 1904 had only two general nursing services; more were needed and urgently. In 1906 the Public Health Act called for the establishment of a Provincial Board of Health, with health and hospital inspectors and a provincial health officer to oversee all hospitals, orphanages and reformatories.[95] Entirely consistent with this emphasis on health services, and with on the dearth of existing services capable of serving the expanding population, was the shift of the Misericordia Sisters away from an exclusive focus on unwed mothers to general hospital nursing, a shift that will be documented in the following discussion.

The Changing Role of the Misericordia in Edmonton, 1900 - 1906

When the Misericordia came to Edmonton in 1900, they came to a Franco-Catholic population a large part of which was Métis; in which the

expansion of the Francophone population base was urged by public figures; and in which marriage customs were different to those in Montreal. The illegitimacy ratio was high but there is every reason to believe that little popular concern could be raised on this account.

It must be stated at the outset that although some other Misericordia missions were originally established as general maternity hospitals,[96] the Mother House in Montreal has never undergone a transition to general nursing. The institutional change of direction of the Edmonton order was not the result of a horizontal shift in the Order's operations. It was, rather, a specific reaction to local conditions in Alberta. That other missions also varied their activity from that of the Mother House in Montreal does nothing to detract from the argument for institutional flexibility; these represent other manifestations of similar circumstances.

The informal, familial style of the Edmonton Miséricorde undoubtedly encouraged its use as a hospital by the general populace. Not only was it customary for doctors attending patients throughout the night to breakfast at the Miséricorde,[97] but when maternity patients, or ex-patients from out of town arrived either to stay or to visit, the hospital served as sort of hotel for them and their husbands and children.

In the absence of alternate specialized institutions in the Northwest at this time, the Misericordia took on the character of a general asylum for the helpless and hopeless, as well as that of a hospital. Clergymen from as far away as Calgary place orphan children with the Sisters, as did Rev. P. Fitzpatrick, for instance, on October 7, 1903. Another orphan was left by some people from Banff. A number of children were placed for a fee in the hospital, often in cases of

marital disputes; the Sisters could then find themselves in the position of marriage counsellors. Girls as young as thirteen were sent as novices to receive instruction from the Sisters. In one case an old man, whose board was paid by the municipal authorities of Strathcona, came to live at the hospital. In another, a poor indiot girl with a child was brought to them, thinking she had come to the "hospital of eternity" in order to die there.[98]

In March 1906 the Sisters moved to their newly constructed hospital. By that summer they were operating a general, rather than a maternity hospital, with thirty non-maternity cases, not counting the children in the sick bay. All was crowded and busy. The hospital had lost the domestic ambiance of the old refuge. As a Sister wrote "it is nothing but going and coming in the house lately; we are hard pressed to look after strangers and visitors . . . . We are beginning to learn what it is to be a general hospital."[99]

The following table demonstrates the growth of the generalized side of the Misericordia, and the orphanage component, as well as the waning attention devoted to unwed mothers.

TABLE V

Edmonton Misericordia Residents as of December 30th of each year,[100]

1901 - 1906 and 1915

	1901	1902	1903	1904	1905	1906	1915
Sisters	5	6	5	5	6	10	14
Nurses	1	2	2	3	2	8	17
Novices	-	3	-	5	3	-	-
Unwed mothers	4	4	3	2	3	-	4
Children	3	11	12	7	17	7	23
Patients	-	-	-	1	3	24	47
Nursemaids	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
Servants	1	1	1	1	1	5	3
Total	14	27	23	24	35	54	113

While the number of unwed mothers stayed fairly constant, the general nursing patients increased from zero to forty-seven between 1903 to 1915, and the Sisters from five to fourteen. Penitents and their children continued to be of special, but not primary, interest.

That the concept of illegitimacy carried the meaning it did in Montreal (nineteenth century) is doubtful, given the heritage of fur-trade society marriage customs. Certainly, religious, cultural and political leaders tried to impose the values of Christian Europe, filtered through eastern Canadian society, on the Northwest frontier. The coming of the Misericordia to the Northwest was a part of the attempt by Franco-Catholic religious groups to order family life on the frontier through providing a resource of assistance and rehabilitation to women who conceived children out of wedlock. The fact that the Misericordia quickly shifted its focus away from unwed mothers is an indication of the inappropriateness of the rehabilitative model as applied to unwed mothers in the culturally diverse and rapidly expanding western population of 1900. In spite of isolated cases of infanticide, the evidence does not point to widespread child abandonment or infanticide by unwed mothers. A high incidence of illegitimacy such as there was in St. Joachim parish, coupled with a low incidence of recourse by unwed mothers to the refuge run by the Sisters, is consistent with the view that unwed mothers were not rejected by their families on account of their pregnancy, or if alone, were able to themselves. The fact that even before the arrival of the Misericordia, in 1899, the illegitimacy ratio was over seven percent of all baptisms, and that the first year they were in Edmonton, when only two illegitimate births took place at the hospice, the ratio was seventeen per cent indicates that it was not simply as a result of the

Misericordia and the potential of their presence to draw women from other parts of the province to Edmonton, that caused these high rates of illegitimate birth. High illegitimacy in St Joachim predates the Misericordia.

Their role in female reform thus truncated, the Sisters of Misericordia in Edmonton thus embarked on a course of action that would culminate in general medical care, hospital administration, nurisng and nursing training. The ability of the Order to adapt so quickly to new circumstances attests to the flexibility of their community.

Notes - Chapter IV

1 Chronicles, June 1900, Archives of the Misericordia Mother House, Lachine, Quebec.

2 John W. Bennett and Seena B. Kohl, "Characterological Strategic and Institutional Interpretations of Prairie Settlement," in A. W., Rasporich, Western Canada Past and Present (Calgary: McClelland and Stewart West, 1975), p. 17.

3 Letter from Bishop Grandin to the Reverend Mother Superior of the Winnipeg Misericordia, December 19, 1899. Archives of the Archdiocese of Edmonton, Papers of V.-J. Grandin. See Appendix A.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 Paroisse St. Joachim, Record of Baptisms 1899-1908, Salle Paroissale de St. Joachim, Edmonton.

7 Ibid. See Chapter Two, Note 49. Knodel and Hochstadt outline three ways of measuring illegitimacy. The simplest measure is the ratio of illegitimate births to total births, or the illegitimacy ratio, which is used in this study. Because this figure depends on nuptiality, or the number of women of reproductive age who marry, and also on marital fertility, it is thought by demographic historians to be a crude measure. A second measure of illegitimacy is the general illegitimate fertility rate, which relates the number of illegitimate births to the number of illegitimate births to the total number of unmarried women of reproductive age, usually taken as fifteen to forty-nine. It requires the number of illegitimate births and the number of women by age and marital status, provided by censuses. A further refinement is the index of illegitimacy, designated as Ih, obtained by integrating the average number of illegitimate births in a given area, the number of non-married women in each five year, and a marital fertility for Hutterite women in the same age group, Hutterites in North America having the highest marital fertility ever recorded. See Laslett, Bastardy, pp. 285-286.

Because of gaps in the evidence available for Alberta 1900-1905, the only possible method of measuring illegitimacy in Edmonton is the illegitimacy ratio; Alberta Vital Statistics has published no historical data on illegitimacy; nor are birth records available for research purposes. Censuses are unreliable in any case for this period, in their assessing marital status, for many marriages were not considered legal by the authorities, particularly in the Metis and native populations.

Parish records vary in consistency and ratios deriving from them must be considered cautiously. The baptismal register of St Joachim, for instance, was meticulously kept for the years 1899-1904 but after that seems to fall into disuse, recording little other than deaths.

Clearly, the measurement of illegitimacy ratios among a population in which consensual marriage was the custom, makes no sense at all except when viewed from the perspective of a tradition, such as

the Franco-Catholic one, that rejects marriage unsanctioned by the Catholic Church, and believes it right to work towards extending its own world-view to others. Illegitimacy as a category may not have existed in Amerindian culture circa 1900; but it did from the point of view of the Misericordia Sisters, which is what is important here.

8 E. Van de Walle, "Illegitimacy in France during the nineteenth century," in Laslett et al, Bastardy, p. 270. Figure given is for 1896-1900.

9 From 1900 on, the Oblates were endowed with the spiritual direction of the Order of Misericordia. Auclair, p. 267.

10 Barabé, p. 45.

11 PAA, Oblate Papers, Correspondence and Journals of Vital Grandin, June 1899 - June 1900. April 13, 1900.

12 Chronicles, September 16, 1900.

13 Ibid., August 1900.

14 Ibid., August 1900.

15 Josette, for example, an aging Indian woman, was described by the Sisters as "une vraie savagesse de l'ancien temps dont la vue seule peut rendre nervreuse la personne la plus flègmatique." July, 1900.

16 A. Cashman, Heritage of Services: History of Nursing in Alberta (Edmonton: Alberta Association of Registered Nurses, 1966), p. 50.

17 Chronicles, September 29, 1900.

18 Edmonton Journal, August 23, 1972, on the demolition of the old hospital.

19 Chronicles, throughout.

20 Auclair, p. 288.

21 See Ch. III, h. 30, above.

22 Auclair, pp. 220-221.

23 Cons. Ord. of the North West Territories, 1898, Ch. 20.

24 Ibid. Also, PAA, Oblate Papers, Journals of E. Legal, D-1-60, October 21, 1899. The subsidy is given as $.35 per patient per day.

25 Chronicles, throughout. Evidently winter weather did not put a stop to this activity.

26 Ibid., July 27, 1905. Two women of dubious virtue from Chicago, masquerading as nuns, were found by the Sisters canvassing railway employees on the line near town.

[27] Ibid., Dec. 24, 1900.

[28] Ibid., March 1901.

[29] Ibid., throughout 1901.

[30] Ibid., December 21, 1903.

[31] Ibid. The December letters, 1901-1905, list the number and status of residents as of each December 31.

Sister Cécile, Archivist at the Archdiocese of Edmonton, provided some of these figures.

[32] St. Joachim Baptismal Records, see n. 6. above.

[33] Report of the Census of the North West Territories, 1885 (Ottawa: 1886), for example, lists the population of Edmonton (1885) as 5,613, of whom approximately 1000 were Métis; 3000 Indian. But the 1906 Census lists the 1907 population as 2,626. Why did the population of Edmonton drop between 1885 and 1901?

Whether the enumerators in 1901 ignored the native population previously counted, or whether by that time the Indians and Metis had disappeared from the town, through either dispersion or death, is not clear.

[34] Census of Population and Agriculture of the North West Provinces, 1906 (Ottawa: S. Dawson, 1907), p. xxi.

[35] See Appendix A.

[36] 1906 Census, as per n. 34 above.

[37] The 1885 Census lists as living in Edmonton at that time: (Table IV, pp. 14-15).

Indians:	3017	
Francophone:	French - 582	
	Métis - 940	
	Total	1522
Anglophone:	English- 310	
	Irish - 217	
	Scots - 462	
	Welsh - 3	
	Métis - 64	
	Total	1056

[38] Census of Canada, 1901, Table IX, "Populations of Cities, Towns and Incorporated Villages in 1906 and 1901 as classed in 1906."

[39] Robert Painchaud, "French-Canadian Historiography and Franco-Catholic Settlement in Western Canada, 1870-1915," Canadian Historical Review, Vol. LIX, 4, (Dec. 1978) pp. 455-462.

[40] Ibid., p. 456.

[41] Census of Pop. and Agriculture, pp. XII and XIII.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Ibid, and also Census for 1885, p. 70 and Census for Canada, 1901, p. 131.

[44] Census of Canada, 1901, (Ottawa: 1905) Vol. III, Table VIII, pp. 114-123.

[45] Young Women's Christian Association, Minute Book, 1907, PAA 68. 301 1/1-14.

[46] H.C. Klassen, "Life in Frontier Calgary," in A.W. Resporich, Western Canada Past and Present (Calgary: McClelland and Stewart West, 1975), p. 46.

[47] Y.W.C.A. Minute Book.

[48] The magistrates' names, in Alberta for the period 1899-1914, indicate the predominantly Celtic or Anglo-Saxon heritage of these infludential men: Newlands, Scott, Harvey, Wetmore, Sifton, Stuart, are examples. (Territories Law Reports, various, 1899-1914).

[49] "The Act for the Temporary Government of Rupert's Land and the Northwestern Territory," Statutes of Canada, 1869, Chapter IV; also the "Northwest Territories Act of 1875," provided that existing laws of Canada should prevail in the Territories subsequent to that region's change of jurisdiction from the Hudson's Bay Company to the Dominion of Canada. English precedents were frequently invoked in the Courts, however.

[50] Cons. Ord. of the North West Territories, 1898, Ch. 46.

[51] Sylvia Van Kirk, "Many Tender Ties," Women in Fur-Trade Society in Western Canada, 1670-1870 (Winnipeg: Watson and Dwyer, 1980).

[52] Van Kirk, Ch. 9.

[53] Territorial Law Reports, Vol. IV, p. 86.

[54] Ibid. p. 88.

Joseph McFarland testified as follows: "Nicholas Sheran told me on several occasions that he intended to marry her whenever a clergyman came along. His sister, my wife, used to remonstrate with him for living with this woman in the way he was doing. He was a Roman Catholic. There was no resident catholic clergyman in the neighborhood

during the time they lived together. Catholics had no means of marrying at that time unless a priest happened to come along. When I was married I met a travelling priest at Macleod and drove him down to the coal banks for the purpose of marrying my wife to me." p. 88.

Father Lebret testified that "the rule of the Church is that no Catholic shall present himself for marriage before a clergyman of any other denomination; that if a Catholic . . . (is so married) . . . he grievously infringes the rules of his Church. . . and that there are no circumstances under which a Catholic man and woman would be justified in going before a Protestant clergyman for the purpose of marriage."

55 According to which bigamy, polygamy, or any form of plural marriage was an indictable offence.

56 Territorial Law Reports, Vol. VI, pp. 173-175.

57 P. Ward, pp. 1-3.

58 Cons. Ord. of the North West Territories 1903, Ch. 9, section 3.

59 A search for these affidavits included files of the Justices of the Peace for Edmonton, 1903-1910; of the Attorney General, and of Edmonton parish records. Court records for Edmonton have been destroyed up to 1949, for family and child welfare and custody cases.

60 Territorial Law Reports, Vol. VI, p. 77, in The King v. Lougheed.

61 The Criminal Code, 1892, pp. 55-56 Vict., Ch. 29, s. 181: "Everyone is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to two years imprisonment who seduces and has illicit connection with any give of previously chaste character, of or above the age of fourteen years and under the age of sixteen years. Revised Statistics of Canada, c. 157, s. 3; 53 v., c. 37, s. 3., and also s. 182, "Everyone above the ages of twenty-one years, is guilty of an indicatable offence and liable to two years imprisonment who, under promise of marriage, seduces and has connection with any unmarried female of previously chaste character and under twenty-one years of age. 50-51v., c. 48, s. 2.

62 Territorial Law Reports, Vol. VI, pp. 79-80.

63 Alberta Law Reports, Vol. VIII, 1914, in Rex v. Rioux, pp. 47-51.

64 Constance B. Backhouse, "Shifting Patterns in Nineteenth Century Canadian Custody Law," David H. Flaherty (ed.) Essays in the History of Canadian Law, Vol. I (Toronto: The Osgoode Society, 1981). Backhouse notes the increasing frequency, by 1900, to award mothers the custody of their own children (rather than fathers, as earlier had been the case). She attributes this shift, however, not to an increased awareness of the rights of women; - rather - "it seems likely that it was the newly emerging concept of childhood and adolescence that improved women's custody rights. The basic and dominant impulse seemed to be not justice to women but the need to recognize and protect children . . . ." (p. 213).

[65] PAA, 66.166, Box 35.518.544. 1907.

[66] PAA, 66.166, Box 47.782.856. 1906.

[67] On August 22, 1911, the brother-in-law of Louie C., - who was also the father of her newborn child, exposed the infant out of doors on a pile of straw where it quickly died in the 45° F air, and buried the infant corpse. Western Law Reporter, Vol. 26, p. 153.

[68] Cons. Ord. of the North West Territories, 1903, Ch. 9.

[69] Z. Will. Vol. IV, Chap. 34, s. 15.

[70] Territorial Law Reports, Vol. III, p. 232, 1893, in Farrell v. Wilton. The judge referred the court to the Queen v. Barnardo (1899) 61 Law Times 547, 37 Western Review 789, and also to Barnardo v. McIHugh, 65 Law Times 423.

[71] Territorial Law Reports, Vol. III, p. 232.

[72] Chronicles, June 1904.

[73] Ibid., December 23, 1900.

[74] Ibid., January 5, 1906.

[75] Patricia T. Rooke and R.L. Schnell, "Chilhood and Charity in Nineteenth Century British North America," Social History 15 No. 29 (1982) pp. 157-179.

[76] Personal communication, Sister Cecile, Archivist, Archdiocese of Edmonton.

[77] Chronicles, December 17, 1900.

[78] Ibid., September 10, 1907.

[79] Ibid., January 12, 1904.

[80] Alexandre Brunet, La Famille et ses traditions (Montreal: Eusèbe Sénécal, 1881), p. 158. "Sitôt que vos enfants auront la moindre intelligence, faites-leur savoir qu'ils out un père quiest an ciel, qui les regarde toujours, encore . . . .; car les impressions reçues, dès le bas âge, des enseignements des parents ne s'effacent plus dans le cours de la vie."

[81] Jean-Pierre Wallot,

[82] J.M.S. Careless, "Aspects of Urban Life in the West," in A.W. Rasporich and H.C. Klassen (eds.), Prairie Perspectives 2 (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973), p. 25.

[83] Careless, pp. 25-38.

[84] J. McGregor, Edmonton: A History (Edmonton: Hurtig, 1967), p. 128.

[85] Careless, p. 25.

[86] City of Edmonton Directory for 1908, p. 35.

[87] Careless, p. 38.

[88] McGregor, p. 187.

[89] City of Edmonton Directory, p. 35.

[90] Edmonton Bulletin, December 10, 1900.

[91] Le Courier de l'ouest, October 14, 1905.

[92] City of Edmonton Directory, 1908.

[93] PAA, 71.47/1, Beulah Home Papers.

[94] Census of Population and Agriculture, 1906, Talbe 14, p. xx.

[95] Statutes of Alberta, 1906, Cap. 8.

[96] Auclair, see Chapter seventeen. However, the initiative for a separate orphanage was a feature of the Mother House, starting in 1897-1898 when a building was constructed for this purpose. Auclair, p. 304.

[97] Chronicles, November 30, 1903.

[98] Ibid., September 6, 1900; October 24, 1903; June 22, 1904; February 6, 1903.

[99] Ibid., July 4, 1906.

[100] Ibid., December 30, 1901, 1902, 1903, 1904, 1905, 1906 and 1914.

CHAPTER V

Summary, Observations, Conclusions, Suggestions for Future Study

The aim of this study was stated at the outset to be twofold. First, it was to demonstrate that the origins of the role of the Misericordia Sisters are in the Christian will to preserve human and especially infant life. Secondly, it was to show that their role, in the rescue and rehabilitation of unwed mothers, owed its format to a combination of the original motive and of local conditions. The institutional expression particular to the Misericordia in both Montreal and Edmonton has been shown to have evolved in response to interplay and tension between, on the one hand certain moral and ideological sensibilities, themselves strands of longstanding divergent traditions in European and Europeanized societies, and on the other hand the socio-economic realities of nineteenth century Montreal and early twentieth century Edmonton.

In Chapter One it was noted that the problem that prompted this study was the change in the nature of the work of the Misericordia Sisters when some of the Sisters moved west to Alberta. In the Montreal Mother House the work of the Misericordia, in 1848 when the Order was founded, in 1898-1900 at the time of westward expansion, in 1906 when the Edmonton Misericordia Hospital was built, and in the present, was, continued to be and is, the provision of physical, spiritual care and moral education, to unwed mothers and their children. In Edmonton by 1906, however, the Misericordia Sisters had shifted the focus of their work to general hospital nursing, reserving for unwed mothers a special but secondary emphasis. In exploring the origins and evolution of the Misericordia, this study attempts to understand the reasons for this change.

Any study of unwed maternity is perforce a study of illegitimacy. It is Peter Laslett's suggestion that historians must search further

than the quantitative histories, to the history of morals and manners, to unravel the paradox of illegitimacy, that has directed this study. It is an interactive nexus of individual, social, environmental - and the Sisters would say divine - attributes that give illegitimate birth its power of stigma.

Illegitimacy, infanticide, foundling life, are topics in the history of childhood. Although its subject is unmarried maternity, this is a study in child rescue, in the sense used by R. L. Schnell to extend and explicate Aries' notion of a modern conceptualization of childhood. In tracing a seminal influence of child saving ideology back to early Christian times it is important to note a major difference between the pre and post Reformation eras: in the earlier period, the impetus to rescue children was a religious rather than a social one. The life of the child was important, it was thought, not so much to human society but to God. To allow the destruction of His creatures was disrespectful and sinful. It was with the increased emphasis on parental duties to children, which has been described in some detail by J. L. Flandrin, beginning with the writings of Aquinas in the thirteenth century, that appears to have commenced a focus on the child as important to society as well as God. Later, at about the time when Reformation and secularist thought tended to de-emphasized the role of the divine in human affairs, this image of the child was to sharpen, and childhood was to begin to assume the ideological contours described by Schnell, consisting of protection, separation, dependence and delayed responsibility. The deliberate rescue of unwed mothers aimed first and foremost at the protection of the unborn child; institutions devoted to this goal manifest child rescue ideology whether they want ostensibly to save the child for God, for society or for the child, himself.

Chapter Two, "Historical Perspectives on Illegitimacy and Infanticide," musters evidence from religious and historical works to trace the origin of child saving in Western society from the time of the early Chistians to the founding of the General Hospital of Paris. In early times the concept of child saving was related primarily to a Christian religious outlook: its object was the baptism of the child. Infants rescued from exposure or abandonment, were no sooner baptized than they were sent off to a wet nurse at whose hands they frequently died. The care of foundlings in Europe devolved from medieval times on female religious organizations, often with some support from secular authorities. Little is known about foundlings and their care much before the seventeenth century. But during the late seventeenth century appears to have begun the dramatic rise in illegitimacy that has caused historians such as Shorter, Foucault and Donzelot to surmise that Westerners became more concerned with and interested in sexual activity than previously. The result was a proliferation of foundlings and an intensification of the efforts to rescue them that ultimately, was to include the rescue of unwed mothers. Such women were part of the amorphous body of dependent poor who were eligible for incarceration in the hôtels-dieux that were the French equivalent of English poor-houses. But with the founding of the General Hospital of Paris in 1658, began a process of differentiation of classes of the poor, including unwed mothers, into those subject only to restraint and those deemed worthy of varying degrees rehabilitative efforts. This represents a marked change in attitudes and sentiments to unmarried maternity and illegitimacy. Before this, the perception of unwed mothers as unfortunates, as victims as well as sinners, was in general confined to various religious orders whose outlook stressed repentance and mercy - or "Miséricorde" in sexual

as well as all other matters of sin. The various institutions of the General Hospital were founded with the support of the state and an administrative structure that made them accountable to the monarchy as well as incorporating them as enduring entities. The distinctions made between various classes of inmates, unwed mothers included, on the criteria used to determine the extent to which the authorities thought them to be rehabilitable, represents a departure from the older form of relief to the poor and penance for sinners.

Chapter Three, "The Sisters of Misericordia in Quebec, 1848-1900," brings the discussion into a nineteenth century Canadian context. Using data published by Canadian social historians, and archival material from the Misericordia Mother House, this chapter outlines the conditions in Montreal surrounding the initiatives of the Misericordia Sisters. It also analyzes the institutional development of the Order to show the reformist or educational nature of the Sisters' intentions and procedures in the rescue and rehabilitation of unwed mothers.

It was from French traditions, sentiments and attitudes that the religious orders of Quebec derived their social if not religious outlooks and ideas. Although the ability of the Church to order the social life of New France and Quebec as it might have wished seems to have been less than definitive, it was religious organizations upon whom fell the rescue of social misfits, including unwed mothers and abandoned children. The Misericordia was one of these. Earlier examples of Catholic religious orders' involvement in providing philanthropic relief to the poor demonstrate that historians must look to French Canada for the earliest Canadian examples of organized child rescue as well as other forms of voluntary social benevolence.

Chapter Four, "The Changing Role of the Misericordia in Edmonton,

1900-1906," outlines some demographic, economic and attitudinal factors affecting the evolution of the role of the Misericordia in Edmonton. As has been noted, its focus shifted, in a six year period, from a focus on unwed mothers to a concentration on general hospital nursing. The chapter uses the Chronicles of the Edmonton Sisters to document this change. It suggests, using census data, law reports and archival material from the files of the Attorney General (Northwest Territories and Alberta) that there was less demand than in Montreal for care for unwed mothers in turn-of-the-century Edmonton because social attitudes and moral behaviour were not the same as in Quebec. The Montreal Mother House did not change in a similar fashion to the Edmonton mission. It was however the familial, communal, voluntaristic nature of the Order that allowed its ready response to local circumstances.

In summary, then, this study traces the origins of the Sisters of the Misericordia, a nineteenth century Franco-Canadian Catholic women's benevolent organization aimed at the rescue of children and the rescue and reform of unwed mothers. The seminal influence is found in Catholic theology, that is in the doctrine of baptism as necessary for all of God's human creatures. The evolution of the Order as an institution is seen to depend, in its various expressions, on local conditions, sentiments, attitudes and behaviours, especially as they bear on the nature of marriage and relations between men and women.

In what ways have the definitions suggested at the outset of this study, - of relief, rescue and rehabilitation - been furthered by the investigation of the Sisters of Misericordia? Child rescue, first of all, is seen to originate in Christian ideology; but not until the post-Reformation era, when the focus on the spiritual salvation of the child shifted to include a concern for physical well-being, did the

modern "ideology of childhood" begin to be articulated. The Foundling Hospital and various Magdalene refuges attached to the General Hospital of Paris meant a change in the intentionality with which unmarried mothers provided for their illegitimate children. As historians have noted, mothers frequently brought infants to the foundling homes, once the institutionalization of public support in the hospitals meant they could thus assure child some degree of nurture. Had the concern been only for the child's spiritual welfare, they equally well could have had the child baptized prior to abandoning it. That baptism was not followed by exposure but rather by surrender of the child to an institution indicates that concern for the child's material as well as spiritual well-being, was a growing factor in popular sentiment towards child life. The institutionalization of unwed mothers was one further step to safeguard the life as well as the soul of the infant.

We do not know the extent of infanticide or child abandonment in the colonial Canadas. We know that in nineteenth century Quebec these were common enough to concern the authorities. We know that in Edmonton at the end of that century, among the Franco-Catholic population at least illegitimacy was not viewed with the extreme repugnance attributed to the population in literary and anecdotal accounts. Infanticide in early twentieth century Alberta was not common, but not unknown. In Quebec, the attitude towards unwed motherhood was that sexual non-conformity demanded rehabilitation, not punishment. In Alberta, neither seemed particularly necessary.

This study has implications for the history of women in society in that "rescue" was seen to apply not only to infants but as well to their mothers in cases where these were unmarried. Is this an example of the infantilization of women that was fostered as the middle class western

family unit grew increasingly private, conjugal and childcentred, and wives and mothers were cut off behind the doors of their "golden cages"?[1] Indeed as the family focused on the nurturing of children as its primary function, and as the moral virtues seen to be pertinent to proper child development were attributed especially to women they too came to be seen, like children, as lacking independence. This was a tradition perfectly in harmony with older patriarchal ideals of feminine deportment - ideals which have alternately ebbed and flowed according to various circumstances, times and places, but which have been in some form long present in western culture. The rehabilitative efforts of the Misericordia in relegating women to a symbolic childhood were consistent with prevailing norms of female behaviour in mid-to-late nineteenth century Montreal.

That the Misericordia's work with unwed mothers essentially was rehabilitative, however, belies the commonly held assumption that early philanthropic, and in particular Roman Catholic attempts to provide relief to unwed mothers unintentionally "encouraged promscuity and illegitimacy by providing disreputable females with a convenient means of disregarding the consequences of their fallen state and escaping the onerous responsibilities of motherhood."[2] This accusation was frequently directed at Roman Catholic orphan asylums whose open admissions policies were criticized on this ground. The criticism was that the Catholic benevolent organizations aimed at redemption rather than reform. Perhaps the concern for spiritual renewal was misinterpreted by observers, particularly Anglo-Protestant zealots, as a neglect of moral education. It might be argued that the emergence of new attitudes to social assistance and the rejection of voluntary philanthropy,[3] were predicated on the lack of rehabilitative focus of

organizations such as the Misericordia. But, as has been shown in Chapter Three, the intent and the procedures of the Sisters of Misericordia were educative as well as redemptive. The records indicate that the open-door policy was indeed open to women as long as they were at least seen to be repentant and that the policy could be revoked in cases of behaviour unacceptable to the Sisters. Furthermore it is clear from the analysis of the educational or rehabilitative "program," that this instance of Catholic benevolence was directed in specific ways at the prevention of further recurrence of illegitimate pregnancy, and was therefore not, in the manner intended by the critics, encouraging vice.

In this role the Misericordia was certainly a component in the "Catholic challenge"[4] of philanthropic activity directed at women and children in nineteenth century Canada, a factor that has been cited as one of several reasons for the growth of the volunteer philanthropies such as the Protestant Orphans' Homes in Halifax, Winnipeg, Kingston, Ottawa, Toronto and Victoria. In this role the Misericordia can be said to have had an enduring influence on the formalization of care for dependent children throughout Canada. The connection between the institutionalization of social assistance to unwed mothers in the General Hospital of Paris and a similar trend in colonial Quebec as well as in nineteenth century Montreal, represents a transfer of metropolitan social forms to North America not only in terms of ideals that crossed the Atlantic from France but also as to an institutional structure for social relief formed in the light of those ideals. Through the expansion of Franco-Catholic religious orders, moreover, these forms touched areas of Canada far from Quebec. In Canada, studies of religious thought and expression, which have tended to remain compartmentalized in categories of ecclesiastical and secular, and

Catholic and non-Catholic, fields of study, a trend which could usefully be altered if we are to understand fully the historical development of social institutions.

It has been commonly argued that institutions often perpetuate the very problems they are formed to solve, as they quickly establish a structure that is self-perpetuating and self-interested. The Order of the Sisters of Misericordia demonstrates the emptiness of this generalization in at least this one case. The Order in Edmonton, finding little demand for the specialized service to unwed mothers that constituted the whole activity of the Montreal Mother House, quickly re-oriented itself to new conditions and responded to a need that did exist.

This argues for the possibility of creating, for the purpose of social benevolence, institutions than can and do respond with sensitivity to local requirements and circumstances. The internal structure of the Edmonton Misericordia has been shown to have been, in 1900, defined by: smallness; informality; the integration of domestic and professional responsibilities, activities and communication; the autonomy to act, within the limits of an ethical/religious code; a philosophy shared by all participants; a commitment by members to a cause larger than material success; self-sufficiency on the economic level; and accountability to peers, as well as to religious leaders. This structure, historically evident in the Edmonton Misericordia during the initial period, 1900-1906, gave the Order the flexibility that ensured its success in spite of the lack of fit, at first, between the services offered by the Sisters and the needs of the community.

In 1900 Bernard Bailyn defined education as the transmission of culture from one generation to another.[5] Since then, it has been clear

to historians of education that their efforts must be directed towards a variety of social institutions rather than schooling alone, for culture as we understand it refers to the spectrum of technical, ethical, behavioural, expressive and epistemological attributes of social life. The family is an agent of both socialization and education. There may be no constituents more far-reaching than those learned informally, internalized at an early age, about self and family: sex roles, gender identity, styles of childishness and maturity, modes of personal interaction, and the potential for individuality within a social group. If we are to understand how people in the past learned, and what they learned, about their worlds, it is crucial to have a clear grasp of what it meant to be a child in times past; of what defined families; of how sexuality related to social life; of the structures and processes that defined families at different times in history; of the abstractions that formed the basis of how people perceived their lives. It is hoped that this study has illuminated a small corner of past family life in Quebec and Alberta by exploring the work of a religious order dedicated to the re-education of unmarried mothers.

Recommendations for further study in the area of infanticide, illegitimacy and unwed mother are simple but potentially far-reaching.

First of all we need many more studies of Franco-Catholic child care institutions in Canada. Micheline Dumont-Johnson's "Des Garderies au XIX^{e} siècle: Les Salles d'asile des Soeurs Grises à Montréal"[6] is an excellent start; moreover it demonstrates the richness of documentary material from such organizations. The Catholic female religious orders may accurately be said to have operated the first schools in many areas of Canada.[7] Not until these are investigated will Canadian scholars be able to claim a thorough familiarity with the histories of education, of

childhood or of the family.

In particular the history of infanticide could be furthered by analysis of the records of the Grey Nuns of Montreal. Because these Sisters extended their work through mission schools, orphanages and hospitals through Canada, their influence is unquestionable, and much could be gained in furthering the knowledge of past child life by study of their endeavours.

Secondly, we need more studies of the French and English metropolitan institutions, customs, traditions and laws as these bear on family, educational and childrearing practices in our own country. A point in case is the history of the General Hospital of Paris. There is no recent study that looks at this remarkable institution from the perspective of reform and rehabilitation and virtually no major English language studies of it at all. Detailed studies of the educational thought of Aquinas, of St. Vincent de Paul, of the thinkers whose ideas directed institutions such as asylums, orphanages, and hospitals from medieval to modern European times, and of the actual operations of these, are needed. Religious thought is an area most neglected by contemporary historians, an oversight then must be corrected if we are to truly understand how people in the past saw their world.

It is hardly necessary to say that had all these been available, this study would possibly have been much different than it is. Hopefully, it will orient future readers to take up some of the important questions raised within.

Notes - Chapter V

[1] For an enlightened discussion of Victorian feminity and the role of child-rearing in the defining of womanhood in the late nineteenth century see Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English, For Her Own Good: 150 Years of the Experts Advice to Women (New York: Anchor Books, 1979), Chapters One and Six in particular.

[2] Patricia T. Rooke, "The Rise and Decline of North American Protestant Orphans' Homes as Woman's Domain, 1850-1930," Atlantis 7, No. 2 (1982), p. 28.

[3] P.T. Rooke and R.L. Schnell, "Child Welfare in English Canada, 1920-1948," Social Science Review (September 1981), p. 484, argue that "during the first three decades of the twentieth century . . . the philanthropist and voluntary agency succumbed to charity organization and social welfare."

[4] Rooke, "Rise and Decline," p. 25.

[5] Bernard Bailyn, Education in the Transformation of American Society (New York: W.W. Norton and Co. Inc. and Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1960), p. 14.

[6] See Revue d'Histoire de l'Amérique Francaise 34, No. 1 (1980), pp. 27-55.

[7] See R.J. Carney, "Relations in Education Between the Federal and Territorial Governments and the Roman Catholic Church in the Mackenzie District, Northwest Territories, 1867-1961." Dissertation, University of Alberta, 1971; also: L'Abbe E.-J. Auclair, Histoire des Soeurs de Sainte-Anne, Les Premiers Cinquante Ans, 1850-1900 (Montréal: Les Frères des Ecoles Chrétiennes, 1922); P. Duchaussois, The Grey Nuns of the Far North (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1919); J. Labissonière, Providence Trail Blazers (Edmonton: Sisters of Providence, 1961).

[8] Ibid.

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Personal Communications

Sister Alice Trottier, Newman Centre, Edmonton.

Sister Cécile, Archivist, Archdiocese of Edmonton.

Sister Dupuis, Archivist, Grey Nuns, Provincial Centre, Edmonton.

Sister Thérèse Gingras, Archivist, Misericordia Mother House, Edmonton.

APPENDIX A

(Translation: L. Savage)

December 10, 1899

My Reverend and dear Mother,

I am well behind in replying to your good letter of November 13 for which many thanks. I have unfortunately no more than one poor unfortunate woman for whom salvation is in question in my poor diocese. Too many of our poor Métisses get married to transient Whites in the country and are subsequently abandoned. Today most of these live in the greatest disorder and are unable to extricate themselves. M.J.P. has not yet lapsed into this disorderly life, she is still with her parents, a father brutalized by drunkenness and a mother who is good but malleable, cowardly and possibly-feeble-minded. This also is the character of Mme P., who I hope to send you in the spring. I say in the spring because our Sisters of Charity cannot take charge of her children until then. If, however, before this time I can find a way to send her to you at little cost, I will try to do so. There are no difficulties as to the conditions, I think she will accept them without any trouble. Although I do not know her aptitudes, probably you could use her to good advantage in the laundry. As far as nursing goes, in the mission, you might use her, but I advise you not to send her to town. This woman and in general the Métis women must above all be spared temptation, they have no strength of character. There are many exceptions, doubtless, but exceptions they are.

Respectfully,

Vital-J. Bishop of
Saint-Albert, O.M.I.

P.S. If moral misery were sufficient to draw you to us, I would make initiatives to this direction, for we certainly have need of your help, but we are not sufficiently advanced yet for that. If, however, your society could establish a mission without our help, I beg you in grace to come to our assistance.